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HINDOOS KILLING A GOAT.

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EXCURSIONS

IN INDIA;

INCLUDING A WALK OVER

THE HIMALAYA MOUNTAINS,

TO THE SOURCES OF

THE JUMNA AND THE GANGES.

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BY CAPTAIN THOMAS SKINNER,

OF THE 31ST REGIMENT.

W. 6. 20

——— Wherein of antres vast, and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heav'n,
It was my hint to speak.

SHAKSPEARE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

W. 6. 20

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LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,

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1832.

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CONTENTS

OF THE

SECOND VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

Jungle fowl — Awkward rencontre — Mountains on fire — Killing a goat—Hindoo repast—Romantic scenery—Delightful spot—Snowy ridge—A shepherd's life—Erecting an altar—First view of the Ganges — Mountain springs — Hamlet of Tearoo — Honesty of the Hindoos — Anecdote of an old villager—Respect paid to age 1

CHAPTER II.

Arrival at the Bhagirathi—Water of the Ganges—Monkeys—Village of Suchi—Difficult journey—Ascent of pyramids — "Giant's causeway" — Rocky pass — Ingenious excuses — Grandeur of mountain scenery—A female pilgrim—Religious mendicants—Asking charity—Village of Mookba—

Want of supplies—Mountain priests—Substitute for writing-paper—Deaf and dumb children—Supposed idiots—Situation of Dorali—Frozen region 20

CHAPTER III.

Bhairo Ghati—The Cow's Mouth—The Jumna and the Ganges—Ridge of mountains—Sacred memorials—Customs of travellers—Preservation of monuments—The saint, Bairo—Journey to Gungoutri—Course of the river—Foaming cataracts—Dangerous situation—Gungoutri—Hindoo superstition—Devotion paid to the Ganges—A prophet outwitted—Apparitions—Death by starvation—Brahmins, or Pundahs—Hindoo worship—Endurance of torture—Trial of fortitude—Self-devoted victims—Mountain legend—Sacred hill—Faquirs—A miracle—Situation of Gungoutri—The goddess Parbutti—View from Gungoutri—Sacred head of the Ganges—Forbidden food—Bairo Ghati—Flock of sheep . . . 40

CHAPTER IV.

Spasmodic attack—Singular picture—Return to Mookba—Imaginary complaints—Remains of a temple—Inscriptions—Heavy rain—Scene of confusion—Ludicrous picture—Comfortless situation—An encampment—Whimsical scene—A stormy night—Effects of the rains—Arrival at Dountgul—Return to Tearoo—Change of temperature—Apricot-oil—Opium—Temple to Mahadeo—Agriculture—Monkey depredations

—Cruel amusement—Turning the tables—Scenery of the Ganges—Curiosity of the natives—Eastern customs—Unexpected meeting—How to get rid of a bear—Fields of rice—Music and singing—Complimentary stanzas—A picture—Dignity of travel—Mal-à-propos meetings . . . 74

CHAPTER V.

Reputed source of the Ganges—A miracle—A frail fair-one—The lord of Burkotee—The faquir's festival—Sacred temple—Women, the source of evil—Agreeable repast—Simple fare—Village of Matlee—Mountain breezes—Right of possession—Route to Dhoondah—Creed of the Hindoos—Religious martyrs—Arrival at Patthara—Annoyances of flies—Agriculture—Uncomfortable shoes—Cedar tree—Sacred plants—Tyranny over servants—Situation of Barrehtee—Faquir tribute—Valley of Chinalli—The "happy valley"—Venomous serpents—Wild honey 109

CHAPTER VI.

Old Man of the Mountain—Singular circumstance—Descent into a cave—An unexpected visiter—Party of Ghorkas—Mode of carrying children—Management of children—Village of Moralie—Dismal journey—Velocity of sound—Opinion of an echo—Deserted temple—Desolate scene—Route to Landour—Fragile habitations—The cholera morbus—Its ravages—Arrival at Landour—Terrific thunder-storm—Perilous

situation — Effects of the lightning — Blindness in sheep — Amusements—The ordeal—Quarrels — Extraordinary request —A jealous husband—The penitent wife—Female peasantry —Condition of servants—Fatal jealousy—Custom of divorce —The rejected villager—Valley of the Dhoon—Magnificent sun-rise 113

CHAPTER VII.

Descent from Landour—The rainy season—Police station — The Khere Pass—Sounds of revelry—Melancholy memorials —Peacocks—Village of Khere—Violent hurricane—Excursion through water—Rise of the Callinuddy—Goats rescued— —Agreeable discovery—Holy water—Active preparations— Passage of the river—Night encampment—Deobund described —Fare of the Hindoos—Food of the Bengalese—A Turkish dinner—Begum Somroo's troops—A stratagem—The disgraced General—Female tyrant—Baggage-bearers—Roads in Upper India—Kutowlee—Saees, or Running Footmen—Females at the well—Eastern custom—Meerut, a military station—Scarcity of women—Magnificent festival—Amusements at Meerut— Colonel Skinner's horse—Travelling in a palanquin—Eastern hyperbole—Ghaut of Ghurmoktesir—Interior of a boat—Singular navigation—Ferruckabad—Curious clock—Indigo factories—River scenery—Mahometan ceremonies—Cooking and eating—The lost keys—Crocodiles—Ghaut of Cawnpore— A budgerow—Boats at Cawnpore—Moored vessels—General clamour—Attractions of a bazaar—Appearance of native

towns—Soldiers' wives, &c.—Hospital transport—Amazonian fleet 174

CHAPTER VIII.

Confluence of the Jumna and the Ganges—Travels to holy places—Town of Mirzapoor—Various kinds of fish—Emblems of mortality—Hindoo melodies—Fort of Chunar—Route to Benares—A snake-charmer—City of Benares—Ceremony of bathing—Female bathers—Ghaut of Benares—A suttee—Devoted widows—Self-immolation—The Suttee—Passage of the Ganges—Scene of tumult—Embarking horses—The Soane and the Ganges—Ghaut of Dinapore—A life of indolence—Places of worship—Arrival at Patna—Leave of absence—A native city at night—Return of the crew—Wages in advance—Pay of boatmen—Pinnaces—Trade of Monghir—Blacksmiths and beggars—Hindoo charity 247

CHAPTER IX.

Village of Colgong—Comfortless habitations—Mussulman tomb—Story of a tiger—Rajmahâl—Ruined palace—Tomb of Mr. Cleveland—The Rajmahâl hills—Entrance into the Bhagirutty—Sacred branch of the Ganges—Hindoo toilette—Customs of the Hindoos—Villages of Bengal—Scriptural illustrations—Tamarind trees—Bats—White ants—Singular vow—Insects, vermin, &c.—Architecture in the East—Bazaar at Burhampore—Invalid soldiers—Return to Calcutta—Attachment of native servants—Proof of sincerity 288

EXCURSIONS IN INDIA.

CHAPTER I.

Jungle fowl—Awkward rencontre—Mountains on fire—Killing a goat—Hindoo repast—Romantic scenery—Delightful spot—Snowy ridge—A shepherd's life—Erecting an altar—First view of the Ganges—Mountain springs—Hamlet of Tearoo—Honesty of the Hindoos—Anecdote of an old villager—Respect paid to age.

JUNE 1st.—By our day's rest we had acquired vigour enough to make another clamber to the opposite side of a high mountain, which appeared thickly wooded, and divided from us by a rapid stream, when we found the village of Bukoulie. We met in our route every variety of road, and

the necessity for every manner of moving. In some parts of the forest we saw several jungle fowl: they have exactly the same habits as the domestic poultry. The cock struts at the head of his hens, and keeps a strict watch over their safety. Whenever they were disturbed by our attempts upon them, he flew to the highest branch of some tree beyond our reach, and crowed with all his might, while his dames ran into holes and corners to escape our attacks: they are so cunning that we found it impossible to get within shot of them, with all the caution we could use. While intent upon capturing at least one, as we were creeping after them upon our breasts, lying occasionally like riflemen under cover of the unevenness of the ground to catch them *en passant*, we came suddenly upon an ambuscade that very soon put an end to our sport.

We were about midway up the face of a hill that was thickly covered by trees, and much clogged by shrubs and creepers that wound in all directions. On reaching the foot of the enemy's position, still advancing upon our breasts, and bending a keen eye upon the birds strutting before us, up rose, with a growl that denoted an offended

spirit, (for we had literally touched his tail,) a large black bear; and turning round, looked us in the face with the most undisguised astonishment. It was the most unsought, as well as unpromising introduction I had ever met with. There was no time for parley; and, getting upon our legs, we at once stood on the defensive. This sudden metamorphosis completed his surprise, and, yelling louder than before, he set off as fast as he could shuffle from the extraordinary animals that had so unaccountably sprung up before him.

We determined that discretion was the better part of valour, and began to retrace our steps, letting the jungle fowl benefit by the interruption. Having much faith in proverbs, and in none more than in that which declares that "familiarity breeds contempt," we resolved that the bear should not learn to despise us by a repetition of the intercourse: we continued our journey, and in a few hours arrived at Bukoulie. It is situated similarly to the one in which we had passed the last two days, a valley confined by high mountains.

Immediately opposite to where our tents were

pitched, the grass had been set on fire, and smoked the whole day long. There was no wind to carry away the vapour, which, hanging about the vale, added very much to its heat: it felt exactly like the atmosphere in a hot climate, when an oppressive stillness indicates the approach of a storm.

I did not at first perceive the cause of this mountain sirocco, but almost apprehended an earthquake. At night, however, it displayed itself in the most splendid manner: the flames that the "garish day" had eclipsed, blazed forth with the brightest beauty, and in the most fantastic manner. Had a Tivoli been established on the face of the opposite mountain, its festoons of light could not have been more tastefully arranged. It was a long and high ridge, covered to its summit with pine-trees, and here and there jagged with clefts of stone, the bottoms of which were furzed with bushes; a stream flowed at its base, and its sides curved gradually from the top to the water below. The flame first stole gently up the sides, and met on the summit; another line of fire ran from its base, in circles and semicircles in every direction, communicating with the sides in several places,

till all seemed arranged for some great festival with the utmost precision.

These regular lines of light did not long continue; for it suddenly burst forth into one universal blaze, with an effect as startling, but far more brilliant, than the St. Peter's dome, when the clock strikes eight upon the celebration of that saint's day. Now the fire crept along the ground, and then rushed to the top of towering pines, which in a few moments, nodding and crackling, fell to the earth, with a noise that might have passed for the beginning of an eruption of Vesuvius: large fragments of rock, that lost their support by the falling of the trees, rolled to the bottom with a din that told what the height of a volcano is. For a moment a line of fire was lost in one of the clefts, and, fed by the wood within it, came rushing forth with tremendous fury, "a giant refreshed;" while a continual and steady light illuminated the top, from the numerous gummy firs that capped it. No rain had fallen for a long time, and the communication was as rapid as possible: sparks flew to the opposite side and the mountains round, which were soon ignited.

In a few hours I seemed the centre of a world in flames, and felt some slight apprehension of being roasted. I was like the scorpion within his circle of fire, and seemed to have no chance of escaping the ordeal, but by proving myself a Cato: for the crackling sound drew nearer and nearer, and the heat was quickly becoming greater and greater. It seemed like the burning of a desolate city; and I had only to people it in my imagination with shrieking inhabitants, to make it as striking a picture of a fire as any on record, for the general outline was sketched with a bold and powerful hand. However, the element was under control, for I live to tell the tale and to describe a more domestic blaze that took place in my own little circle.

There is great authority for this transition from the sublime downwards, to what may deserve to be deemed, perhaps, the ridiculous. My coolies, imagining that their long journey merited a reward, claimed my promise of the goat. They discovered one for sale in the village, and with petitioning looks brought it before me. It was very large, with fine horns and long hair, and

might have been about ten years old. The circumstance of its being the acknowledged father of most of the flock in the village, did not seem to dismay them in the least; and on my granting the feast, they assembled round it, chanting something that may have been meant for a thanksgiving. They then prepared the pile as if for a sacrifice; and, leading the animal up to it, severed his head from his body at one blow, and allowed him to bleed over the fagots. It is deemed most unfortunate to be obliged to inflict a second stroke; and a shout of joy hails the headsman who completes the execution at the first. To facilitate as much as possible the operation while the executioner stands ready, with uplifted sword, by the animal's side, another tempts him with his favorite herbs to stretch his neck, realizing to the letter the beautiful lines of Pope:

> Pleased to the last he crops the flow'ry food,
> And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood!

The bloody fagots were thrown upon the fire, that had been kindled at a little distance, and the charm seemed wound up: the skin was torn off

in a few minutes, and the carcase cooked and divided. In less than an hour the banquet was spread; and loud singing, with the gentle accompaniment of a tom-tom which they had picked up in the village, gave sufficient proof that they were pleased with the repast.

As I witnessed the preparation with great interest, they were anxious nothing should escape me, and brought me the head of the poor ram that had just undergone a singeing with a burnt stick before it was plunged into the soup. I was curious to learn if a haggess would succeed the "singed head;" but Scotland may still boast undivided right to the "chieftain of the pudding race," as far as my mountain cooks' art goes: it must no longer however refuse to share the glory of sheeps-head broth, which may be now considered, in spite of the fastidiousness of the south, the taste of Nature; for surely the inhabitants of the Himalaya have never learnt the art from any other mistress.

June 2nd and 3rd.—We left Bukoulie, still smoking, at daylight in the morning; and passing the small village of Egaroo, down to a rapid river,

we skirted the ruins of the imaginary city we had seen in flames. Many a goodly tree lay prostrate, and the hill was blackened from top to bottom. We soon ascended to a great height by a dark and dreary forest, where a German novelist would lay the scene of a romance. None but the Spirit of the Waters could inhabit such a place; and when passing the bed of a torrent which roared through a gloomy channel with no light to guide us from its dangers but the white sheet that the spray had formed over them, we expected to see Undine arise and welcome us to her favorite haunt.

The magnificent trees, that shut out the day from these places, were generally chestnuts, and this was the first time we had met with them. They grow to a great height, and some of them measured nearly thirty feet in circumference. The woods were full of pheasants: the moonal and the horned pheasant—the beautiful plumage of the latter, its grey coat with a white spot upon every feather, its golden breast and neck with its purple horns—while it hung calmly over the bounding cataract, gazing on us with its quiet black eye—seemed sin-

gularly out of character with the wildness of the scenery around.

When we quitted this forest we reached a lawn of great richness, through which trickled a clear stream, where we were glad to pause awhile and refresh after our labour. Mora was the name the natives gave to this spot. Beautiful as it was, we decided that it was not quite high enough, and soon recommenced our exertions; and, after another ascent through a dismal forest, reached a clear space on its summit, similar to, but smaller than, the one below. This was named Chatterlong; and here we determined to set up our rest for the remainder of the day. It was wildly situated—just room for our little camp on a green covered with strawberries, and all the flowers that we love to see in England: how delightful must such a meeting be here! Those only who have toiled over the desert know how to value the charms of the first green spot they reach; and will not be surprised at my joy in plucking a cowslip, after having been several years on the plains of India!

We were surrounded by wood on every side but one, that was open to the view of Bundurpuch.

No village was within sight, and the trees around were so thick that we could make no way through them: we were confined in our observations to the space on which we stood. It was delightfully cool; the thermometer at noon was 70°, and at night and in the morning 49° and 51°. We were generally too glad to rest to care about exploring our neighbourhood, unless something very promising invited; we never failed, however, in falling upon beauties, when we did move in pursuit of them.

After a night's rest on this beautiful little spot, we toiled up the hill that rose above it, and in an hour reached its summit, where we found a clear space immediately below a ridge of peaks covered with snow: over one of them we crossed, and from it had a very fine view, less extensive than the former from Oonchul, but still magnificent. We seemed to have penetrated to the very regions of snow, and almost to be transported to a polar ocean. We were level with the lowest apparent range of congelation, and the peaks that bounded our frozen sea rose like icebergs above it. The general livery of perpetual snow was visible for a great distance.

Chumora was the common name of the ridge on which we stood, but Deahra the particular peak we were passing over. On descending from it, we found a meadow of great extent with flocks of goats and sheep browzing upon it: the pasture appeared to be rich and plentiful, but in many parts it was still under snow, in which the sheep seemed to take particular pleasure in standing in crowds closely packed together: they belonged principally to the villages on the banks of the Ganges.

The life of a shepherd is by no means a light one: he has to drive his flocks a great distance for food, and often to travel far in pursuit of a stray lamb. Not very far from where the pasture was, were two small lakes; one of them prettily surrounded by wood. The situation seemed made for flocks and herds. On the tops of the peaks around, and on the brow of the mountain, I observed many of the same description of piles of stone I have before mentioned. This seemed a more essential duty here than even on the last height where I had met them; and my guide besought me to allow him to erect a memento of my passage across, and assured me it would be of es-

sential service to me to have a representative so close to the divinity of the Jumna—for we were quitting his precincts for those of the Ganges. He pointed out the pillars of many "Sahib Lague," whom he had assisted to elevate them; but they are destined to be nameless, or at least to have their names so altered in the pronunciation, that it will be impossible to discover them. I chose a peak where Bundurpuch could overlook me most admirably, and after a little labour erected my testimony of respect for his sanctity; and if the snowy god surveys the abode of my spirit, which my guide assured me it would become, with half the pleasure that I have done his, I shall be perfectly satisfied.

We were not long in commencing our descent: it was as scrambling and sliding a one as usual. After emerging from a grove of reeds, (many of them broken and strewed on the ground, which gave a variety to the cause of our slipping, though the effect was much the same,) we found ourselves on the point of a projecting crag that "beetled o'er its base," and gave us the first glimpse of the Ganges, which was rapid and broad, but dark and

sandy as it flows through the plains. If the sound of *Jumoona* excited my followers to a high pitch, at merely the commencement of their pilgrimage, how much more so would the thrice welcome shout of *Gunga Jee!* when they had at length gained it, after a painful journey of more than thirty days. *Gunga Jee!* was the universal cry for some minutes; and *Gunga Jee!* was echoed by the woods and hills around, till it reached the ears of the slowest of my stragglers, when, calling upon its name long before they saw it, they endeavoured to rush forward, and enjoy the sight they had been so long toiling to obtain. The Hindoos salaam'd and muttered its name over and over again; and even the unbending Mahometan seemed in some way softened by the scene. I sat on one side, to allow full scope to their feelings, affected by the beauty of the picture as much as they were by the veneration of the river.

The coolies were resolved that it should prove a day of jubilee, and assured me that the goatherd they had passed declared there was a ram to be sold in the village of Barsoo, whither we were going. I promised, if that were the case, they

should feast upon it, and gave my servants leave to rest an hour to expatiate on the magnificence of the scene, and luxuriate in anticipation on the prospect of a pure draught of water at last.

"What do you think of the Ganges now?" I asked of one of my bearers. "I shall have a drink of good water," was his reply. Faith goes a great way; but, from the distant view we were taking of it, I did not expect any greater purity than I find in the mountain springs. The villages that rose above the banks of the river, (and we could see many of them,) were very neat; and the culti vation extended over the whole face of the country, from below us to the water; the corn was still green. We left this fertile tract, however, and kept to the north-east, and were not long in arriving at Barsoo. It was considerably above the river; so we were forced to be content with the prospect still, and quench our thirst with what appetite we could on the rills that ran from the hills about us.

June 4. We are disappointed again in not being able to reach the Holy River: our journey this day was up the sides of a rocky mountain exposed to

the eastern sun, with not a single tree to shelter us. In about four hours we gained the hamlet of Tearoo, and pitched on a little pinnacle above it whence we can see the Ganges, to which we hope to descend to-morrow. Sri Kanta, a rugged peak, that rises so abruptly as scarcely to afford rest for the snow, through which the black edges of its furrows shine, and make a striking contrast to the unstained white of all around, is immediately opposite us. The red spinach, that coloured the hills at Barree, "making the green one red," grows in great quantity about Tearoo.

We met here a person of some authority from the Rajah of Tirhee, having a spear and a formidable sword, which hung in a broad belt of scarlet cloth from his shoulder: he was attended by several followers, and had come to collect the revenue of this and the higher villages. Tearoo was rated at twenty-five rupees a year; and as all beyond have about the same advantages, I suppose that is the general stipend paid to the government of Sirinagur. The visits of this important personage are the only communications that take place between his master and subjects; for

they never feel disposed to venture to his court: even for justice it was not worth while to make so long a journey; a native of a village only a few days' distance from the Dhoon told me, when I asked him, how he would obtain justice if he were injured. They cannot have much occasion to apply for it; for no crimes, according to their code of morality, can take place among them: they are the most perfectly honest people in the world; although they had every opportunity of pilfering, from the careless manner in which my things were allowed to lie about, I never lost an article.

When the members of a village are as one family, it would require no great vigilance to detect any misdemeanor, if such were likely to occur. I never could hear, however, of a criminal of the slightest degree in any part of the mountains. The same deference is yielded to age among them, as is general in savage tribes. Although the young men do not rise on the approach of an old one, they obey him with great readiness; and the most aged is generally the ruler, or head man of a village.

I was obliged to hire a person some days ago to

carry a portion of my tent; and the only one that could be spared was an old man. He willingly took up the burden; and the moment he had shouldered it, a murmur arose that he was too old for such a weight, and even women were anxious to spare him the labour. His pride, perhaps, was hurt, for he refused all assistance, and trudged briskly away.

As the path was dangerous, his fellow-villagers begged the party to take care of him, and watch that he did not stumble: he laughed at their care, and assured me that he could travel with any man in the hills. He had not gone very far, when a scream from the village, which overhung a deep precipice, (the opposite side of which we were winding down by a stony and nearly perpendicular track,) intimated that something had happened. I ran to the edge of the abyss, and saw my poor old man, with his load still sticking to his back, rolling away to the bottom of it. He had been too confident, and his pride was doomed to have a severe fall. There was an immediate pursuit from both sides: the people of the village gained the race; and just as the old man had disengaged himself from the load,

which went bounding away, a youth interposed, and saved him. "He is too old," was the only comment made by the lookers-on, which was murmured in every variety of tone. They carried him to the road again, and insisted upon his returning to the village, where, from the loud voices I soon heard, the women took the liberty of rating him soundly for his folly. It is only for civilized countries to display the scandal of neglected old age. It should be a mortifying reflection, that among savages alone can those who have fallen 'into the sere' look with certainty to command that respect which should accompany old age.

CHAPTER II.

Arrival at the Bhagirathi—Water of the Ganges—Monkeys—Village of Suchi—Difficult journey—Ascent of pyramids—"Giant's causeway"—Rocky pass—Ingenious excuses—Grandeur of mountain scenery—A female pilgrim—Religious mendicants—Asking charity—Village of Mookba—Want of supplies—Mountain priests—Substitute for writing-paper—Deaf and dumb children—Supposed idiots—Situation of Dorali—Frozen region.

JUNE 5th.—At last we are seated by the banks of the Bhagirathi: this is the sacred name of the Ganges, and is generally applied by Hindoos to that part of it within the mountains and the holy branch that flows past Moorshedabad, and changes afterwards into the Hoogly. This Bhagirathi was the choleric saint who drank the river dry, when it once impeded his course, and gave it up again at the earnest intercession of another saint, a greater friend to his fellow-creatures.

Descending from Tearoo, we passed over the

rocky sides of high mountains to a large stream that ran into the river, from the snowy summit of a neighbouring mount. It was not an easy way by any means that brought us to the shore of this long-expected object. My servants, who seemed to have practised a rigorous self-denial till they could meet with their reward, rushed forward to seize it, in a draught of water from the Ganges; and revelled in its filth, I may say: for when one of them hastened to gratify me, as he imagined, with the divine element, I was forced to put it from my lips, so great was the sediment.

We had been out six hours, and I chose a spot, (the only clear space we could find) on the banks of the river to encamp on. There was a high rock behind it, from which a cataract fell: both the profane and devout therefore could be satisfied by slaking their thirst in their own way, for I persisted in belonging to the former class, in spite of the contempt and astonishment my taste gave rise to. The river is about eighty yards wide, and flows rapidly over a bed of stone with so great a noise, that frequently during the night I fancied there was a violent storm. The water has the same appearance as it possesses in the plains

—of the colour of sand, and much impregnated with it when skimmed even from the surface. The river is very deep in some places, and passes smoothly over its bed, but with great rapidity; for when intercepted by the slightest obstacles, it chafes with tremendous uproar.

Opposite us, on the other side of the river, is a steep crag, on which play innumerable monkeys, with black faces and grey beards, bearing the strongest resemblance to the old men of the mountains. They seem confounded with our establishment, and we are evidently objects of much speculation to them. The rock on which they gambol is as high as Dover Cliff; and some hang half way down, not engaged in the dreadful trade of gathering samphire, but in watching all our movements, from as fearful positions. A black bear of very good size (I say black because there are many white ones in the mountains) came down to the water to drink; but on seeing us, he thought it prudent to retire.

June 6th.—Suchi, where we are now arrived, is the second village on the Ganges; and from the nearly impassable barrier that divides it from those below, it seems to belong to the mysterious re-

gions that every fresh footstep shows us we are fast approaching; for a gate of difficulty and danger is placed beneath it, to warn the traveller that it is no light labour to attain even an earthly shrine. Much is to be suffered and overcome, before this boundary can be passed; and a hard task it was to persuade my followers to attempt it.

I can never hope to convey a description of our struggles to win the precincts of Gungoutri, yet must endeavour to give some little idea of them. On leaving our former abode, we passed over a brittle bridge of wattle to the left bank of the river. It was a hundred yards broad—rather a long distance for the trembling contrivances used for passing. For more than a mile, (or, to compute more certainly, for half an hour,) we hopped over a path of loose pointed stones, their sharpest parts turned up, as though they had been placed there on purpose, as a trial of fortitude to the pilgrims who go barefooted to the source of the river. The penance is not unlike the infliction of a shoe full of peas; but with this additional disadvantage, that it would be impossible to "soften the rocks"—at least by boiling them.

The same sort of overhanging cliffs of great height, between which we were encamped yesterday, rose above the river; and we were obliged to pass up their faces by the unevenness in them. The ascent of the great Pyramid of Ghizeh, with much less room and regularity than its angle, presents the nearest comparison I can find for it; but it was a frequent recurrence of such a feat. We had no sooner crossed one pyramid, than another offered itself to our escalade. Where two projecting parts were too far asunder to allow of their being taken at a step, the branch of a tree was thrown across, and made so doubtful a footing, it was impossible to pause on the spring. Ladders, similar to those of Jumnoutri, were placed against the slippery surfaces of rocks where there was no rest for the feet. Sometimes they were fastened above by ropes of twisted grass, yet green, and sometimes left to be steadied by the weight of the body that was ascending.

I estimated the height of two or three at thirty feet; and while the water was foaming below, and the trunk of the tree trembled in the grasp, it was

not surprising that no sound was heard but the heavy beating of the hearts around. Convulsions had occasionally riven the rock, and the intervals were filled up by steps of wood so singularly contrived, that it was as difficult to mount from one to another, as it would have been to spring up the space. It seemed to be the intention of the artisans of Suchi, (for to their ingenuity we were indebted for our passage,) to afford as much variety as they could: to assist us to slide down the faces of rocks, they formed a channel between two trees, in the middle of which we placed ourselves, and slipped with the suddenness of a sledge to the bottom. It required no practice to excel in this "*facilis descensus;*" the great lesson to learn was when and where to stop, for the attainment of which we were too often justified in apprehending a hopeless incapacity.

We nevertheless passed this "Giant's Causeway" in safety, and soon entered a country that struck us with as much surprise as the enchanted kingdom of the Prince of the Black Isles had inspired the king with in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, when it sprung up on the skirts of

his own territory. We never hoped to walk by the banks of a river of three or four hundred yards broad with large islands, some of them wooded, in the midst of it. Yet for more than an hour we roamed through such a scene, and in two places the mountains took a circular form, that gave to the river the appearance of a lake.

We could not, while walking round it, perceive its outlet: it was a picture, although in miniature, that might have been placed by the side of Loch Lomond. It was noon before we arrived at Suchi, where we were glad to find the shelter of an overhanging rock, to wait the arrival of our tent beneath. The bearers, although hill-men, trembled at the hazard of carrying their burdens over the pass; and when we approached it, we found many of them sitting in despair at the bottom. "We shall be killed," "we are dying," were the speeches that assailed us. We were obliged to conceal our own astonishment at the height before us; and affected to laugh at their fears. We were afraid to recommend any plan to facilitate their passage, lest they might seize upon it as an admission of the danger, and overcome our

purpose by their clamour. We passed on, therefore, without seeming to notice them, further than by smiling at their thinking it necessary to rest; and left them to "screw their courage to the sticking-point" as they best might; feeling certain, that as we had gone before, the things would in some way be sure to follow. We were not disappointed—they did arrive; but night had nearly set in upon us first.

The Tindal thought it necessary to excuse his delay by a long catalogue of sensations, delivered with all the hyperbole of an eastern story-teller: "This one's heart burst;" and "that one's head split;"—"one trembled at the bottom;" and "the other tottered on the top." No accident, however, occurred, and we were not sorry to witness the preparations making for our first meal at seven o'clock in the evening.

"How romantic!" I think I hear you exclaim, to lie all day in a cave, where the Seven Sleepers might have remained still undiscovered—gazing upon woods and wilds, thundering cataracts, and rushing rivers! But alas! the romance of even such scenes soon dies away before the unpoetical spirit

of hunger that had accompanied us to our retreat. I began to be sadly weary of my uninterrupted seclusion. *La solitude est une belle chose;* but it requires, after all, something more even than being able to say to a responsive *quelqu'un: "La solitude est une belle chose."* I am not ashamed to say that a Pic-nic heightens such a scene considerably.

There is something however in the stillness, the awful stillness of a mountain summit, where, as in the Himalaya, above all human associations, it exceeds even the deepest feelings ever yet excited by the regions of romance. Though a mind were perfectly incapable before of solemn contemplation, it could hardly resist rising to it in such a situation: there is a monotony—a harrowing waste, in the solitary desert, that withers the spirit as the soil is parched. It is not easy to conceive the rapture that the refugee Frenchman declared it gave him to gallop over its dusty sands. I should not find it difficult however to sympathize with him, had he avowed such a feeling from even the least towering of this mighty region. Mountaineers have ever been celebrated for their devotion to

their native hills; and who can be surprised at such love, even where it grows into contempt for the "Sassenach?" What naturalist can expect the eagle to nestle with the wren? I can never restrain my enthusiasm, when I write of the grandeur of mountain-scenery: but to return to the beauties of the Ganges.

Fragments of cooking-vessels and blackened stones, by the water's side, showed that we had fallen upon the track of pilgrims. We have met many returning from Gungoutri, though we have been only one day on the route thither; several had come from great distances, and were carrying the holy water from the source of the river to their respective abodes, even to Benares and to Juggernaut. Among them was a woman of apparently eighteen or twenty years of age, who had travelled from Mhow, and had been to Jumnoutri as well as Gungoutri, and was now on her way to Kedar-Nath. She chose the longest, though easiest way, and from the Jumna had reached the Ganges at Barahat. She had lost her husband not long ago, and was making a pilgrimage to these holy spots for the peace of his soul: her labour to attain this

object was tremendous; for she was half-naked, and her feet were bleeding from the pointed stones. I fancied that she had adopted this mode in preference to the Suttee, and looked with great interest upon her; but I could not learn her history: all she possessed, her cooking-pots and food, she carried in a bundle on her head. A roguish-looking Brahmin, who seemed to encourage her piety, took something more, I suspect, than a fatherly care of her.

In the plains, and particularly in the neighbourhood of Allahabad, I had often observed strings of religious mendicants, with bottles of water balanced across their shoulders; and although I was then willing to accord them all praise, I shall view them as much more meritorious, now that I have been able to witness their difficulties in obtaining it. It seems indeed an absurdity, that so great a labour should be bestowed for a phial of dirty water; but it is explained satisfactorily enough, when we learn that the rich men of the plains are glad to give large prices for it: they take very good care, however, never to go in pursuit of it themselves. It can only be borne by men of the

Brahmin caste; and to the poor of that order, who gain a livelihood by the reputation of sanctity, and to whom one place is as good as another, their trade obtaining them food and drink wherever they go, perhaps such a trip is little more than idleness. They exact whatever they wish from every village; and the poor mountaineers, credulous and ignorant, think it sinful to refuse them.

A native of Egaroo begged charity from me, on the plea of a faquir having taken all he possessed from him some days before: "and because I had no money to give him," said he, "he insisted on having my ear-rings."—"Why did you part with them?" I asked. "He was a faquir: what could I do?" was his reply. I was amused by the manner in which this man coloured the indignity of begging. He brought me a number of walnuts, and, placing them before me, said his children had sent them as a present, and hoped I would eat them for their sakes. He turned the conversation, with great ingenuity to faquirs, and told me the tale of his robbery with a careless air; then cracking a walnut, and offering it to me, when he

thought he had won my interest, hoped I would give him something to replace his ear-rings, without which he felt quite uncomfortable.

Suchi is situated in the midst of snowy hills: it stands a great height above the river, and on the lower end of the ridge, which runs nearest to the outer barrier, between it and the Jumna; Linga is the name of the hindermost range, and Ralla the snow-capped peak in front.

June 8th.—From Suchi, four hours brought us to the first village on the Ganges, Mookba. It is on the right bank of the river, and immediately opposite Dorali. We had passed over a good road, for within the limits of the wall we conquered yesterday, we have found "a happy valley," compared with most that we have passed. Between this village and Dorali, a few days ago, there was a bridge; but the water having suddenly risen, it was swept away: it consisted merely of planks passed from this side to an island of sand in the centre, and thence to the opposite shore. The bed of the river must be at least four hundred yards broad; it has many islands in it, round which the water rushes with great rapidity

and apparent depth. The communication between these two villages being thus interrupted, has caused a great deal of trouble, and obliged me to remain longer than I proposed, to obtain supplies of grain for five or six days. The Brahmins of Mookba declare that they have not meal enough in the village for ten men, and have been shouting all day long to the opposite side, for the zemindar to send some over: as they do not seem very anxious to serve us, and the distance round is six miles, by a bridge three miles higher up the stream, I must submit with all the patience I can.

. . . . . .

I am assailed in the mean time with the cries of hunger on one side, and the lies of hypocrisy on the other. The Brahmins, who are ever the most difficult to deal with, pretend to serve me with the utmost anxiety, and strive to avoid parting with an ounce of flour. The appetites of men who can devour a ram, are not easily controlled, and I have slipped them on the pursuit. It has had the desired effect, and much more than requisite has been produced; while my servants assure me there is yet abundance of "corn in

Egypt."—The addition of eighty people to a small population may, however, have the effect of creating an apprehension of famine, if it should not reduce them to that state itself; so I cannot wholly blame them for withholding a supply. I cannot give them credit either for acting only from self-preservation; for laziness, I fear, is the first grand cause of their objection. It is a little barefaced to answer, "We are Brahmins, and have no land: there is a zemindar a day's journey from us;" while the corn is cutting down before our eyes, and the water-mill turning with deafening noise within our hearing.

I cannot, from my experience at Mookba, withdraw my condemnation of the mountain priests. They are as dirty and ignorant as their brothers whom I have already celebrated for eminence in those qualities; and their women "out-Herod Herod." There is one man, however, in this village who can write and read: he was educated at Barahat, where there once was a school; but I fear the schoolmaster found himself too little appreciated to be tempted to continue his vocation. He is a shrewd knave, and has had the advantage of

travelling a little: he has been in the valley of the Dhoon—a great event! and I have begged him to guide us to Gungoutri. He writes on the bark of a tree, the Boji Putta, well known throughout India as the inner covering of Hookah snakes; and it makes a capital substitute for paper. The trees are in great quantity hereabouts; and, as the bark is peeled off in large sheets, it requires no preparation, nor is it necessary to have a peculiar pen to write with, as is the case with leaves that are still used for that purpose in the East.

The natives of Ceylon as yet employ no paper: they write on thin leaves of the Ola, and are obliged to make use of an iron pen, which they support in a notch cut in the thumb-nail of the left hand, allowed to grow for that purpose: a literary man is discovered by such a mark. A quill or a reed serves my friend of Mookba, for the pen runs as quickly over the skin of the Boji as it would over the surface of a glazed sheet. I know I am not relating any thing new in mentioning this truly natural paper; for I believe the word *liber*, a book, was derived from the custom of using a similar one.

I have been very much surprised to find several deaf and dumb children in this village: I have seen five boys and one man so afflicted, and the Brahmin tells me there are as many more in Dorali, in the same state. They attribute it, as they do every calamity out of the common course, to drinking the snow water. It is not easy to adopt such a conclusion, if one may presume they were born so.

The manner of keeping infants asleep, by laying them under a trickling rill which falls gently upon the head, common in the Sirmoor range of hills, might possibly produce that effect, were it practised here: it is here, however, too cold for such a method. A refractory person has frequently been restored to order in England by the cooling discipline of a pump; but I do not know whether the restlessness of a babe could be safely overcome by cradling it under a spout. In these mountains, children, so lulled to sleep, grow up to be stout and hardy men and women. I do not insinuate, however, that the penal code of an English nursery would be improved by such a process, notwithstanding the amusement that might be derived from the perpetual play of well-

arranged shower-baths over the screaming pets of a large family.

The parents of the dumb youths call them idiots, and say they are good for nothing. The expressions of their countenances belie that character: they appear to me to be lively and inquisitive to a degree—qualities that fools never possess. The want of power in the parents to express their wishes in any other way than by speech, is rather the cause of their uselessness than imbecility. "He is a fool—he cannot speak," they say, with a shrug of contempt; and certainly they are right to set such store by speech, for it is the only thing that raises them above the level of brutes. The father of one of the lads—a handsome boy, with a large black eye—complained that he could not even depend on his tending the cattle; for he would frequently sit on the wildest crag, and seem to care for nothing, watching the sun when it set, as the old man phrased it, "as if he expected it back again," while the cattle wandered where they pleased. It is not usual to find "a fool so deep contemplative;" and there may be more in the poor youth's mind than is dreamt of in the father's philosophy.

They die early; for it is singular that there always have been dumb children, while instances of such men are rare. This would probably be the case in Europe, were it not for the institutions that place their minds on a level with those who have the advantage of them in other respects. No wonder that these helpless creatures, who meet with contempt because they are unfortunate, should pine in thought, and end their lives before they become men! I must not forget to mention, without intending any reflection, that I never could hear of a speechless girl. No female had been born dumb within the recollection of the oldest Brahmin at Mookba.

This place is held by all visiters as somewhat holy. My guide from Suchi, the moment he obtained a sight of it, made a profound salaam, and muttered a prayer. It is indeed the key to the sacred spot, which none can dare to penetrate without an attendant spirit from Mookba. Dorali, the opposite village, is situated on the banks of the river, in a recess made by a cleft in the mountain, down which a torrent of water falls, apparently direct from the snows of Sri Kanta, the

peak of which rises like a marble pyramid above it. Thick forests of pine extend from the water to the skirts of the frozen region, and water rushes down to the river from the heights around, growing into large streams before it reaches it. As I have arranged my commissariat to be supplied for as many days as we shall be absent from the hum of men, to-morrow we mean to reach the celebrated Cow's Mouth; and we have a large tribe of pilgrims in our train.

CHAPTER III.

Bhairo Ghati—The Cow's Mouth—The Jumna and the Ganges —Ridge of mountains—Sacred memorials—Customs of travellers—Preservation of monuments—The saint, Bairo—Journey to Gungoutri—Course of the river—Foaming cataracts—Dangerous situation—Gungoutri—Hindoo superstition—Devotion—paid to the Ganges—A prophet outwitted —Apparitions—Death by starvation—Brahmins, or Pundahs—Hindoo worship—Endurance of torture—Trial of fortitude—Self-devoted victims—Mountain legend—Sacred hill —Faquirs—A miracle—Situation of Gungoutri—The goddess Parbutti—View from Gungoutri—Sacred head of the Ganges—Forbidden food—Bairo Ghati—Flock of sheep.

JUNE 9th.—We have at length gained the mysterious precincts of the Holy River. Bhairo Ghati, below which we are encamped, is three hours' walk from Mookba: midway between it and that village we crossed a bridge to the left bank of the river, and by a tolerable path arrived at this ghat,

from which we descended to another bridge about thirty yards long, and as many in height above the stream. We are placed on a little pinnacle, just large enough to contain the party, and overlooking the confluence of the Jahnavi with the Bhagirathi.

Bhairo Ghati is a place of great sanctity, from its being perhaps the last height a pilgrim had to reach, ere he descended to the grand object of adoration, the Cow's Mouth. To me it proved a place of great pleasure, for it introduced to me the first gooseberries I have seen since I left England: there are close to my present situation a great number of them, as well as currants. It is simple, perhaps, to turn from such a celebrated spot to contemplate a gooseberry-bush! but the native of the northern hemisphere prefers his own little star to the bright constellation of the southern cross!

Legends say, (so my Brahmin guide informs me,) that once there was no road beyond this, and here concluded the toils of the pilgrim. The rock, which has little more remarkable in it than a cavity apparently worn by the water, once joined a neighbour on the other side, and formed an

arch, very little above the surface of the stream: then it resembled the mouth of a cow, and was worshipped from the opposite shore of the Jahnavi. As nothing could be seen beyond it, the river was supposed to issue from the mouth; and so great a miracle merited suitable devotion: an earthquake probably divided it, if ever it were joined, and, the veil being rent, a more holy spot was discovered. The Bhagirathi flows from the south, and the Jahnavi from the east. To a common observer, one has as much claim to be the true Ganges as the other; of the same width and colour, and apparently the same depth, and running with equal rapidity between similar channels of rocky mountains.

It is surprising to see rivers so great a size, so near their probable sources. At the point of their junction the bed is fully sixty yards broad, and the Ganges, as far as visible, is between twenty and thirty. So late as 1803, so little was known of this place, that it was believed, from the report of a native, to be narrow enough to be leaped over: it could be done by no common-limbed mortal.

The rivers rush towards each other with tre-

mendous noise and swiftness, meeting at right angles, and sweeping away to the west; receiving from the mountains around many tributary streams. I passed over a deep chasm in a rock this morning by a narrow plank, at the bottom of which ran a brook of eighteen or twenty feet in width. The scenery around is wild: no hills are visible beyond those which immediately bound the river, save a snowy ridge called Mallorra, to the north-west. The peaks of the nearest are of rough and ragged rocks, with now and then a patch of snow in their crevices. Their bases, for about a hundred feet from the water, are formed of overhanging crags, worn into almost every shape by the friction of the river: magnificent pine-trees grow on the brows of the hills, and shoot like tall masts from the clefts of the projecting cliffs.

When large masses of stone are disunited from the mountains, (for many lie scattered around, as though placed there by the shock of an earthquake, for sometimes such convulsions do occur,) pine-trees spring up to a great size upon them, without the least appearance of earth to nourish them. A mighty pyramid of stone stands behind my tent, that has evidently fallen from a great height; for

the space it occupied above is visible, with the trees it brought with it in its descent, green and flourishing about it.

Soon after we quitted Mookba we began to meet the cairns that the pilgrims have piled up in commemoration of their labours. They are numberless beyond belief, and placed in the most whimsical positions. Some are exposed with a degree of ostentation in the midst of the path, each carefully erected, and large enough to pass for the tomb of a hero; while others are met unexpectedly in the deep shade of the woods, indifferently arranged, and unlikely to last.

You may trace the spirit of the pilgrim in the manner of leaving this anonymous chronicle of his feat. Sometimes I have seen these pillars perched on the branches of trees, and concealed in the hollow of a decayed trunk. They rise from the almost inaccessible crags, where to place them seems scarcely in the human power, and rest in some fissure of a chasm, through which a cataract tears, that to look at puts "toys of desperation" in the brain. However vain the memorial may be to the labourer who erects it, it stamps the spot with a holiness, in the eyes of those who follow,

which fails not to have due effect on their minds. The Hindoos were not able to contain themselves; they had anticipated every thing that was wonderful, but these countless traces of devout men confounded them indeed. "*Wah! Wah!*" with their hands upraised, and their eyes turned to heaven: "*Wah! Wah!*" was all that they could find breath to utter.

No custom is more universal than that of travellers to distant regions or remarkable places, leaving some proof of their performance behind them; and the least pompous and absurd is the nameless method I have described. There is something ludicrous in the extreme in the name of "John Giles" on the apex of the pyramid. I had the good fortune to see this illustrious individual, with his coat off, chiselling that sonorous title upon the highest point of the great one of Ghizeh. "I am determined it shall last," said Mr. Giles, as he dug the letters an inch deep into the stone. What a glorious spirit! When many generations more shall have passed away, and the pyramid looks over a new world, what antiquarian will tolerate for a moment the uncertainty of Cheops, in the face of the recorded ex-

istence of John Giles! Inscribing names upon sacred edifices, pillars, and even statues, may deface them, to be sure; but what signifies that, when some future traveller will be taught that they were visited by a Mister Somebody before he was born! Piling up stones perhaps would be an inconvenient substitute for such a custom, although men of taste might devise many elegant structures that would improve the surrounding scenery: and no one could object to their writing their names upon their own altars. I have frequently lamented that no public-spirited people have suggested a method of preserving monuments from injury, without depriving the world of the means of learning who visited them!

When I visited Pompey's Pillar, without the walls of Alexandria, some years ago, I was anxious to see the inscription upon its pedestal, that had transferred it to Diocletian as the proper owner, and sought for it in vain. What I had always been taught to consider granite, seemed suddenly changed to marble. A British ship of war had put into the bay a few days before, and some of the officers were kind enough to ascertain the exact height of the pillar: they painted the

shaft and base of it white,—and in black letters, that reached from top to bottom of the column, declared that the crew of His Majesty's ship —— had fixed the altitude of the pillar at 94 feet some inches! Then followed the commander's name, and much more in most legible English, that made the Greek hide its diminished head. A virtuoso would have gone distracted; and had it not been for laughter, we might also have raged. I never expected to find myself at the mouth of the Nile, while writing of the source of the Ganges. It is time indeed to return!

Bairo, a saint after whom the Ghat, which signifies a pass in a mountain, or the quay on a river, is named, was a devoted follower of the Ganges, and by his intercession with his master many miracles were performed: he is, therefore, worshipped as becomes a person of such influence. A little above the river, in a cluster of pines, and on the road to Gungoutri, is a temple dedicated to his service, at which all devout passengers make their prostrations and circumambulations. Immediately above the river, from the face of a rock, trickles a little stream of a yellow colour,

impregnated perhaps with iron: it flows for the distance of a few yards only, dyeing the ground and stones about it. It is considered miraculous, and every pilgrim takes a small quantity of the earth away, deeming himself happy in having about him two such precious talismans as Bairo's clay and the water of Gungoutri. Many of the people bathed in this part of the river; but I thought the water too cold to make the experiment. The thermometer, however, was much higher than at Jumnoutri in the bed of the stream: here it was 44° degrees.

June 10.—At daylight we commenced our long-looked-for expedition to the mysterious object of so much extraordinary devotion—Gungoutri. It is about six miles from Bairo Ghati; and the road, for the first half of it, is extremely good, winding round the mountains on the right bank of the river, sometimes passing a plain covered with fern, and through forests of pine. The channel, till within two miles of the holy spot, is formed of rocky mountains; many of their peaks covered with snow, and some so rugged as not to retain it. They rise to a great height, and seem like de-

tached rocks hanging in the sky, their summits are so little connected with each other. In some places they approach their banks so nearly, as to give a very narrow vent for the river, through which it rushes with immense force; so large a body of water compressed into a space of twenty feet, requires the resistance of the giant boundary that confines it.

When about two miles from Gungoutri, the channel widens considerably, and the bed of the river at the reputed head itself must be at least one hundred yards in breadth. The stream, which is increasing every day, does not occupy more than a third of it, leaving a large track of gravel uncovered on its right bank. The water not only preserves the sandy colour it has in the plains, but darkens as we draw towards its source. Many of the streams that fall into it, from the peaks around, are as deep in their colour, and appear rather to proceed from some foul cavern than from such pure birth-places, where the snow can scarcely yet be said to have caught "one stain of earth!"

The noise with which the cataracts around

rush into the river, some of them leaping with one spring over frightful precipices, and throwing a thick mist from the spray above them, gives a perfect imitation of the music of Niagara. From about twenty miles below Gungoutri, the mountains appear to vie with each other, which shall yield the largest tribute to the master stream. It made me giddy to look upon the scene. In whatever direction I turned my eyes, they were met by a general whirl of water; and when passing over the bed of a torrent by a narrow plank, I found myself forced to bend my head down lest the universal vertigo should extend to it, and draw me, in substance as well as feeling, into its wild career!

I received a lesson, soon after we left Bairo Ghati, that has made me thus cautious. A singular chasm is riven in the rock close to that place, about twenty feet wide, and two hundred deep—running perpendicularly to the stream which foams fearfully beneath it. The plank, of about a foot broad, which was placed across it, was wet with the dew; and one side of the rock being higher than the other, there was a gentle descent. When I had reached half way over,

keeping a jealous eye on the rushing waters below, (for however dangerous to look on them, there is a fascination in the torrent that not only fixes the gaze, but seems to draw you towards it,) my foot slipped, and I found myself clinging to the plank. The nerves were too much braced by the danger to fail, and I succeeded in sitting upon it. It would be difficult to picture my ludicrous situation, while debating how I should get out of the scrape. There was nothing within reach on either side—and nobody could come to assist me. There I was, like Mahomet's coffin, swinging between heaven and earth. The plank barely fitted its position; and if I had slidden along, I might have drawn it from its support, and ridden upon it to the bottom. It was positively necessary to rise and walk across. With what envy I thought of Madame Sacchi! I fancied my shoes were the cause of my dilemma; and after several attempts succeeded in transferring them to my pockets. It then became an easier feat to rise, and I gained *terra firma* in safety. Many a secure position is sufficiently uncomfortable. I was very safe while bestriding my bridge; but

it was impossible to remain there. I felt almost inclined to let "I dare not wait upon I would, like the poor cat in the adage," convinced that the *premier pas* was to be also the *dernier*.

The prospect of being some years hence, perhaps, exhibited as a petrifaction found in the Himalaya, was a posthumous fame that had no temptation for me, and I screwed my courage to the task. A river as wide as the Thames at Windsor running over an uninterrupted bed higher than the crater of Mount Ætna, (for Gungoutri is nearly thirteen thousand feet above the level of the sea,) would be an interesting object if it had no other claim upon the mind: but the traveller must feel almost disposed to overlook that in the extraordinary scenes that he is destined to witness acted on it. It is impossible to survey this fountain of credulity, to enter this focus of human folly, without feeling as much wonder and astonishment, as the sight of it can inspire devotion and awe, in the victims of its superstition, who toil through so many hardships, to bathe in its dirty water.

Here every extravagance that the weakness of the human race can be guilty of, seems to be con-

centrated:—some, who have been wandering for months to fill their phials at the stream, overcome by the presence of their God, lie prostrate on the banks; others, up to their waists in the water, performing, with the most unfeigned abstraction, all the manœuvres of a Hindoo worship. Under the auspices of Brahmins, groups were sitting on several parts of the bank, kneading up balls of sand, with holy grass twisted round their fingers, intended as offerings to the Ganges for the propitiation of their fathers' souls, which when ready they drop into the stream with the most profound and religious gravity. Such faith is placed in its power of performing miracles, that many haunt it for the most ridiculous purposes, convinced that what they ask will be accorded.

At this moment, a fanatic is up to his middle in the river, praying it to bestow upon him the gift of prophecy: he has travelled from a village above Sirinagur, never doubting that the Ganges will reward him for his journey, by opening the book of futurity; and if fools may be inspired to foretell, there is some probability of this pilgrim succeeding in his object, for he is simple indeed.

He will return, he says, a prophet to his native hill, where all will flock to him to have their fortunes told, and he will soon grow rich.

The Brahmin, who does not seem credulous or bigoted, but rather disposed to laugh at the devotion paid to the River, boldly declares his doubt in its efficacy in this particular miracle at least. Many men in the mountains have aimed at the fame of soothsayers; and although little can happen to vary the lives of the people, or disturb the even tenor of their days, they are remarkably anxious to learn the destinies that await them. It is indeed the natural sin of man to seek to know more than he is wisely permitted. It was necessary, my Brahmin guide tells me—(being behind the curtain, perhaps, he knows too much; like the man who works the puppet, he can scarcely be affected by its movements)—it was necessary to check the wild confidence that was placed in the raving of a prophet, who not long ago possessed amazing fame in the vicinity of Tirhee: and the Rajah, hoping to unmask him, sent for him to the palace. On his assuming his magical position, the Rajah desired him to be

asked, if his wife, who was then pregnant, would be delivered of a son or a daughter? "A son," replied the seer, after due muttering and shaking: —"Mighty Rajah! a son."—"Good!" interrupted the prince: "now tell me what are in my hands," taking them from behind his back, and placing them clenched before the eyes of the prophet. After some deliberation, "There is gold in one, and grain in the other," answered the man. "Lo! they are both empty," exclaimed the Rajah. "Go, you fool—you who cannot tell what my hand contains, when close before your eyes, how should you know what is concealed within the womb?" This proved a perfect *coup d'état*, and the future no longer draws the attention of the subjects of Tirhee from the present.

As I approached the holy shrine, a troop of pallid spectres glided through the woods before me, and vanished like the images in Banquo's glass. I thought I had reached supernatural regions indeed, till a few more yards brought me to a train of naked faquirs whitened all over with ashes: a rope was coiled round their waists, and their hair hung down to their shoulders,

twisted like serpents; their hands close to their sides, they glided along with measured steps, repeating constantly in a hollow tone, '*Ram! Ram! Ram!*' a Hindoo word for the deity. If it required any thing to heighten the wildness of the scene, these unearthly beings were admirably adapted for it. The firmest sceptic in ghost stories would have startled to behold one of these inhuman figures rise suddenly before him; and the slightest shade of superstition would be sufficient to blind the eyes of a believer to the reality of such a form, if in the glimmering of the moon one were to be seen perched upon the brow of a precipice, with an arm raised above the head, incapable of motion, and the nails hanging in long strings from the back of the clenched hand. If the sight of such an apparition could give rise to fear, the deep sepulchral voice with which the words '*Ram! Ram!*' fell upon the stillness of the night, and resounded from the rocks around, would indeed complete the scene of terror!

At Gungoutri there are several sheds erected for the shelter of pilgrims; and as the evening was far advanced, and a storm brewing, I went into one

of them. It was a long narrow building, and the further end was so wrapped in darkness, that I had been some moments in it before I perceived any thing. I was attracted by a sullen murmur, and went to the spot whence it proceeded. A miserable wretch had just blown a few sticks into a flame; and as the light burst upon his countenance, I unconsciously receded, and had to summon all my fortitude to return to him again. His eyes started from his head, and his bones were visible through his skin: his teeth chattered, and his whole frame shook with cold: and I never saw hair longer or more twisted than his was. I spoke to him, but in vain: he did not even deign to look at me—and made no motion, but to blow the embers into a fresh blaze; the fitful glare of which, falling on his skeleton form, made me almost think that I had descended to the tomb. I found that he had come for the purpose of ending his life by starvation at Gungoutri. Many faquirs have attempted this death, and have lingered on the banks of the river for several days without food. The Brahmin, however, assures me that nobody can die in so holy a place; and to

preserve its character for being unconnected with mortality, the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages take care they should not, and bear them by force away, and feed them, or at any rate give them the liberty to die elsewhere.

A small temple marks the sacred source of the river; and immediately opposite is the orthodox spot for bathing in and filling the phials, which, when ready, receive the stamp of authenticity from the seal of the Brahmin who wears it as a ring upon his finger: it bears the following inscription engraved upon it—"The water of the Bhagirathi, Gungoutri." Without such mark the water would not be deemed holy by the purchasers in the plains.

The Brahmins, or pundahs, as they are called in the hills, of this river, drive a very profitable trade. Every pilgrim, with the exception of the mendicants, pay them something for their attendance; and the rich, who often send for the water when they need a charm, send also handsome presents. I observed that these holy personages were much more active in collecting their contributions than in administering to the spiritual com-

fort of those about them. Some of my servants, who promised to give them money when they returned to their tents, could hardly obtain a prayer upon credit: they came to me in a body, with the Brahmin at their head, to beg my security for their fees; and, on my granting it, bargained with as much clamour and earnestness as they would have done for a temporal purchase, for the price they were to pay for the services of the high-priest of the Ganges. It was fixed at last according to their situations and wages, although the Brahmin exhorted them gravely to remember that the great merit lay in self-denial, and giving merely what they could afford was idle and wicked.

I was not able to witness the mystery of their worship, for they protested against my passing beyond the porch of the temple. The sanctum seemed close and unpromising, and I had no desire to pollute it by my touch. It was a busy scene: and although I have always been deeply impressed by the air of poetry that hangs about every thing connected with Arabia, I must admit that I view with greater interest the uncouth, nay, unnatural objects that heighten the awe of this

place, than I did the patient caravan of pilgrims toiling over the desert to Mecca: the silence of the scenes, though the solitude may, cannot bear comparison. In the mountains you can never be wholly quiet: in the desert I have fancied that I could hear the motion of the air! and once on an afternoon, while lying under the shelter of a rock, no being within sight, I was startled by the noise a vulture made in closing its beak, when perched upon a crag many yards from me!

The comfort my followers obtained, with the advantage they hoped to reap, by their prayers and ablutions at Gungoutri, put them in such good spirits, that they would have followed me to the snows of Kedar Nath. The mention of that place of suffering is enough to make the coldest Christian shudder. A melancholy delusion leads the naked and frequently innocent Hindoo to brave the severest torture that the frame of man can possibly be subjected to, with a fortitude that would place him in a rank with the most illustrious of martyrs, were it exercised in a good cause. They wander for miles with almost a light spirit—overcoming hardships at every step that might

entitle them to be canonised — to crown their labours and to close their days in hunger, and in cold that early mortifies their limbs! Crowds have passed from Gungoutri to that mountain (the journey is about four days), and have never more been heard of. Some have been known to repent when yet near enough to return, and have perished from their tortures beneath a jutting rock, their extremities withered, and their pains increased by the contempt and execration of all who pass them, and the keener stings of their consciences, which upbraid them with want of faith, and prospect of damnation! They have an idea that none can find the path to return by unless rejected by Heaven. "A very great crime," said my Brahmin guide, "will induce them to encounter this death."—"What crime do you consider sufficient to need such an atonement?" I asked. "Killing a Brahmin or a cow," was his immediate answer—a strange association; but they are both held in equal veneration; and not unfrequently the cow is most deserving of it of the two. She does not, at any rate, seek to have such a doctrine believed.

It does not follow that a full pardon is accorded to the self-devoted victim. They imagine that the elect are permitted to reach a high peak called Brigoo, from which they throw themselves down to a bottomless abyss, across which a sharp stone, projecting from the mountains, passes: should they fall astride upon it, and be equally divided, they are forgiven: other modes of being cut imply a slight punishment. As the frost soon seizes upon them, none who have reached any distance in the snow ever return: thence the belief that there is no road back for the accepted. Those who tremble on the verge, perish, as I have said, should they escape being stoned to death by the nearest villagers, who believe such sinful beings would bring curses on them.

Kedar Nath is fancied by the natives to have some resemblance to a buffalo, and to that circumstance I believe owes a great portion of its character for sanctity. It was once an animated being, and unfortunately had a quarrel with a powerful giant of the name of Bheem Singh. To revenge itself upon him it assumed the shape of a buffalo, of no ordinary dimensions, and rushed at

v with its utmost violence. The wary Singh, however, bestrode the narrow like a Colossus, and seemed to give the least an opportunity of running between his legs; but when mid[illegible] them upon it, and divided it in two: the head and shoulder became Kedar Nath, while his hinder quarters settled somewhere in the kingdom of N[illegible]e at this moment as one of the lofty mountains in it. So much for mountain legends. It surely was an easy matter to rule a race of people who could believe such clumsy tales as these! The inventors of such fables had a most encouraging credulity in those for whom they were conceived.

I do not know, however, that the legends attributed to Krishna are a bit more absurd than the more classical ones of which Apollo was the hero. A calamba tree on the shore of the Jumna, near Bunderbund, still bears the impression of Krishna's back; for he leaned upon it when he played his pipe to the milkmaids, with whom he passed so merry a time; and one of them, who bore the pretty name of Toolsi, (another Daphne,) was turned, while endeavouring to escape his pursuit,

into that plant which is still called from her the Toolsi, Holy Basil.

There is a hill in the neighbourhood of this sacred place, which bears a holy character, and is at times illuminated and visited from afar for the purpose of worship. In a season of scarcity, the people complained to Krishna, who recommended them to propitiate with offerings the god of this mountain, "Goverdhana." They obeyed, and he, assuming another figure, sat on the summit of it to receive their offerings, which must have been of food; for he presently grew so heavy, that the hill bent under him, and to the present day retains the shape his sudden increase gave to it

The natives esteem the faquirs highly; and many are learned, and perfectly sincere. They pass over the villages like a cloud of locusts, consuming every thing. It is unlawful to injure, and irreligious not to feed them. The Brahmin assures me, that once, no less a number than ten thousand arrived at Sirinagur on one day, and claimed to be fed. Although his assertion is a little too bold to be implicitly believed, I have no

doubt there were enough to cause, as he declares, the apprehension of a famine. The Rajah, afraid of his stores being exhausted, was anxious to get rid of them, and offered each man a certain quantity of grain if they would scatter themselves about the mountains, and not move in so formidable a train. They refused the offer, and, insisting upon being served according to their appetites, established themselves in a body in the town.

They are bound to have no pleasures, and to close their ears and eyes to all gratifications. The Rajah, pretending to tolerate them, as they were assembled at their meal, ordered all the musicians and dancing-girls that could be collected, to assail them with their blandishments, and on no account to relax from the music and the dance, till, scandalised by the scene, they were driven from the city. This *ruse* had the desired effect: fearing that their sanctity might be impeached by witnessing so profane an exhibition, they fled with the utmost precipitation.

Some faquirs have been known to have performed miracles; "but I do not believe much of

that," continued the Brahmin, for he is the most persevering story-teller I ever listened to, and sits in my tent as long as I please to allow him to edify me. "I do not believe much in that, for indeed, I never witnessed a man but once, who could work a miracle. A naked faquir came to the village where I was born, and asked me to be his guide to Gungoutri. He refused food, for he said he could feed himself whenever he felt hungry. 'Take your stick,' said he, 'and leave the rest to me.' 'To you?' I answered, 'why, you are a beggar! what can you give me?' He had nothing with him but the dried gourd, from which he drank water. He looked angry, and repeating, '*Ram! Ram!*' desired me to set forth. When we reached Bairo Ghati, he bade me wait at the temple while he bathed; and on his coming up to it, asked if I was hungry, and what I would like to have: 'Some cakes of flour,' I replied. In a few moments after he had prayed, the ground was spread with cakes. He performed the same miracle at Gungoutri—on that very spot," pointing to the front of the adjoining shed. "I do not lie, for I saw it with

my own eyes, and eat the cakes; and very good they were."—"I do not lie, like Mr. Mathews' Longbow," was the invariable summing-up of every story he told; and it frequently offered a fair presumption why a verdict of 'guilty' should be recorded against him.

The situation of Gungoutri is sufficiently provoking. The river rather widens above it, and nothing can be traced by the eye that will justify a conjecture of its distance from the source. There is no road beyond; and, with all the effort possible, I question whether a traveller could penetrate much more than a mile further. The river about a quarter of a mile beyond Gungoutri winds to the east, towards the high mountain of the Rudru Himmaleh, in which it is believed to have its source. One peak of this mountain is visible from here; that which contains the fountain of the Ganges. The Hindoos suppose that from each peak of the Rudru a river flows, and consider it (for it has several peaks) the birthplace of the most esteemed ones in the Himalaya. It is a species of Olympus too; and while looking at it through a telescope, I was interrupted to

know if I could see the goddess Parbutti standing in a flowing robe on its height.

I delivered my glass to the Brahmin, and he passed it to others; but their unpractised eyes could not even see the mountain; and they marvelled at our different organization, in being able to discern clearly objects which the same instrument made dark to them. Some former traveller had, to amuse the Brahmin, declared he could see the goddess; and so convinced is he of the possibility, that I am sure he will not be staggered by my affirming she was not visible. "It was a dark day," he said; and indeed clouds were gathering fast around the hills.

Although the Ganges flows with equal rapidity generally, and sometimes with much greater, than the Jumna, it forms no cataracts, but passes over a wide bed, excepting at Bairo Ghati, where it is compressed into a narrow bound; and, without any other impediment, chafes with considerable fury. From Hurdwar to the sea, the distance is, in miles, thirteen hundred; what the height of the former is in feet above the level of the latter. The great fall of the Ganges therefore is from the

source to the place of entering the plains; from Gungoutri it has to descend at least twelve thousand feet, in a comparatively short distance, not more perhaps than sixty miles, estimating by its windings. It is fortunate therefore the boundary is so formidable: so great a body of water, running at such a rate, would soon sweep light obstacles away.

When the pilgrims bathe, (and they stand in the centre of the stream,) it reaches to the waist of a common-sized man; and the Brahmin tells me that it preserves the same depth as far as he has been able to penetrate, about a mile higher. The snowy range is not visible from this spot, nor any very high mountains, with the exception of the Rudru, which is twenty-three thousand feet above the level of the sea: a ridge slightly sprinkled with snow, called Deoghat, which seems to meet the hills on the left bank, at the point where the Rudru closes the scene, is the only material one in sight.

After scrambling, with very little advantage, up the precipitous banks that bound the river above Gungoutri, I resolved to abandon any hopes

of reaching beyond the imaginary and sacred head of the Ganges. It is indeed quite far enough away to answer the devout purpose to which it is consecrated: it requires no little labour to gain it, and possesses the appliances of mystery in a sufficient degree, to satisfy the minds that are so predisposed to believe its marvels. As the world has grown more wicked, so the trials have increased in difficulty. In the golden age, it was a light and easy matter to worship at the source; for it then, my Brahmin guide relates, rose at Benares. A more sinful age had to follow it to Hurdwar. From the vice of a third it receded to Barahat; and the fourth is doomed to trace it, through the Cow's Mouth, to the heights of Gungoutri; where I hope it may be content to remain, for the sake of those who propose to suffer in its cause.

On returning to our tent to dinner, after having been so deeply engaged, and so much initiated in the superstitions of the place, I could scarcely avoid startling when I perceived we were to eat the forbidden food: a piece of salt beef smoked upon the board. Profaning Gungoutri by devour-

ing a part of the sacred animal! nothing could have been less in accordance with the spirit of the place. I observed the Brahmin cast a curious eye towards the joint, and mutter something with a horrid face as he left the tent. We expected to see him return with his enraged followers; and, like harpies, pounce upon the table. He could not, however, conceive any thing so iniquitous as the deliberate slaughter of a cow, and gave us the credit of having, like himself, a taste for the flesh of a superannuated ram. I overheard one of the Mahometans say, "they are eating goats' flesh;" which denoted that some little doubt had been entertained regarding our propensities.

The holy water was not calculated to purify our persons from such a pollution. It requires the fullest faith in its efficacy to be able even to swallow it: the sediment is so great, that after straining it five or six times, we were obliged to abandon the trial, and gave additional cause to those concerned in our welfare to despair, when we sent a pitcher to the clearest brook that fell from the nearest hills.

We at length retraced our steps to Bairo Ghati,

passing the tracks of several bears, and occasionally obtaining a distant view of some of them. They afforded us no adventure, however; and I did not think even scientific curiosity would perfectly justify an intrusion upon their privacy, at least to them. We ascertained that they were white, and imagined they were like other bears of the same colour. We caught distant glimpses also of the musk deer. I was more anxious to have had a closer inspection of them; but it was too difficult to follow, to hope to overtake. A man of Suchi undertook to snare one; but he had had no success when we left that place. We encamped on the same point above the two rivers.

There is a road a little below Bairo Ghati, that breaks off from the right bank of the Ganges to Nielung, a village on the frontier of Oondesth, the country of the shawl-wool goat. It is about four days' journey over a steep and rugged way, at present much covered with snow, which, with the prospect of heavy rains falling immediately, must prevent our attempting to reach it. I met several merchants, natives of the province of Bisehur, returning from it, driving a flock of sheep,

bearing loads from thirty-five to forty pounds each. The burdens were swung in bags over their backs, without any cords to bind them on; and they moved up the steep crags, with the greatest nimbleness and indifference to the weight. It is very rare to find a sheep a beast of burden; it is not uncommon, however, here: in this case, they were the bearers of their masters' food, and were natives of the northern part of the mountains; a larger race than the common animals of the hills. They are used for trade, and are made to carry grain from a fertile to a less happy quarter. They travel with surprising quickness, and are kept together without the least trouble. No four-footed animals, but goats and sheep, could be used for such a purpose in any part of the mountains; and the former being too apt to roam, perhaps the latter are the only ones that could be safely turned to such account.

CHAPTER IV.

Spasmodic attack—Singular picture—Return to Mookba—Imaginary complaints—Remains of a temple—Inscriptions—Heavy rain—Scene of confusion—Ludicrous picture—Comfortless situation—An encampment—Whimsical scene—A stormy night—Effects of the rains—Arrival at Dountgul—Return to Tearoo—Change of temperature—Apricot-oil—Opium—Temple to Mahadeo—Agriculture—Monkey Depredations—Cruel amusement—Turning the tables—Scenery of the Ganges—Curiosity of the natives—Eastern customs—Unexpected meeting—How to get rid of a bear—Fields of rice—Music and singing—Complimentary stanzas—A picture—Dignity of travel—Mal-à-propos meetings.

JUNE 12th.—I have observed rain gathering very fast for some days about the top of every mountain,

> On whose barren breast
> Labouring clouds do often rest—

and did not feel disposed, in consequence, to linger in the neighbourhood of avalanches and tor-

rents longer than necessary; so, having erected our remembrances at Bairo Ghati, as we had done at Gungoutri, with becoming solemnity, set out for the village of Mookba.

On the most difficult part of the road, I had too good a reason for discovering that the precincts of the holy place are not free from "the ills that flesh is heir to," any more than a more profane spot. My brother was seized with a spasmodic attack, resembling the cholera morbus so nearly, that I was terrified lest I should have to watch a sick bed in that desolate region. My train was instantly thrown into consternation, and the Brahmin affected to pray, and assured me there was high need, for no persons recovered from such a disease. His bed was spread beneath the shadow of numberless pine-trees, on a sloping bank, and I had him covered with as many blankets as could be collected, and rubbed incessantly, till the medicine-chest arrived: half a wine-glass of brandy and laudanum, equally mixed, had the effect of restoring him to ease. I had seen this dose administered in the hospitals; and as it was given very few minutes after the commencement of the attack, I

believe it had the effect of staying what might, through delay, have proved fatal.

As the draught soon worked a reformation, I had time to observe our situation: a circle was formed round us, as perfect as the trees would permit, of the most anxious faces I ever beheld;—their expression divided between fear for the patient, and astonishment at the doctor—the bed, with a blanket supported on spears for a canopy, in the centre—and a little removed from it, the Brahmin telling his beads with alarming gravity and importance. My servants held a consultation by the pillow of the patient, in which a goat and a game-cock had contrived to be included; many things were suggested by the solemn conclave, and I think they were all adopted in their turns.

There are few scenes so sad as not to possess something of the ludicrous, and the invalid himself could not avoid smiling at the novel and whimsical discipline he was likely to be placed under. A colic in the mountains would make no unentertaining subject for a caricature. We had no room for our tents near the hospital we had so

hastily established, and were obliged to move forward; a hammock was arranged in a very few minutes, by fastening a shawl to a tent-pole, and the patient was carried to a clear space about a mile further on the road, where we remained a day and night.

June 13th.—At noon we began our walk to Mookba, and reached it just in time to escape the first fall of rain. It promises, from the time it has been brewing, to continue for several days; and the natives declare it will prevent our moving beyond Suchi for at least a week. It will be impossible indeed to cross that tremendous pass until the rocks have lost the increased facility of slipping that the water is likely to give them; and our greatest apprehension of going barefooted may happen to be realised, when, even in dry weather, we leave a portion of our shoes upon the pointed stones of every day's journey.

I found the fame of my cure had preceded me, and all the "*malades imaginaires*" of Mookba assembled round my tent to beg a prescription. They recounted, with doleful faces, the sad stories of their sufferings:—some had had head-aches for

years, and some had lost their appetites since they were children. I had to examine fingers and feet, and to administer something to each: for external complaints, I recommended the simple lotion of cold water, which was too much neglected and too little esteemed; for, as in other parts, they preserved their predilection for dirt on the banks of the Holy River, in spite of its power of purification. As the inward complaints seemed to me to be nearly alike, I had one invariable panacea, and sent my patients away congratulating themselves on meeting with so able a physician, convinced of my skill, as they appeared delighted with the uniformity of my practice: for every man held his pill between his finger and thumb; and comparing it with his neighbour's before he swallowed it, chuckled at the resemblance.

As we entered the village, a party of pilgrims, among whom were a woman and several children, drew up on a bank to the right of the pathway and saluted us with groans. I could not conjecture what difference of opinion had made us liable to such a public expression of unpopularity; and approaching them, I found each person press-

ing his hand on his stomach, and making faces that soon explained to me the state of affairs. They had been unaccustomed to such cold water and coarse grain, and all stood in need of my assistance. I astonished these wanderers by my ability, as I had confounded the residents. I have become very weary, however, of this fashionable rage after my nostrums; and for the purpose of soon emptying my boxes, I distributed the medicine with a lavish hand. I shall be able to sympathize with the doctor, whose celebrity prevents his having a moment to himself, and whose time is often consumed in cases as trifling and ridiculous as mine. I am afraid also I can approach too nearly to the feelings of the quack, who, while he gulls the credulous fools who attend him, is the only one aware of his own ignorance. I trust, however, neither my lotion nor my physic will be followed by mischief.

June 14th.—Within about half an hour's walk of Mookba are the remains of a temple. Many fragments of sculptured stone are scattered about, and the country round bears the appearance of having been inhabited and cultivated, the division of the terraces being still visible. I could

learn no clear tradition regarding it; but my Brahmin friend attributed its erection to the Chinese. It has been very large, and was placed in a most commanding position on the brow of a hill that overlooks the Ganges, and commands a view of the snowy range: the stone of which it was built was carefully prepared, and bears the marks of having been formed by more skilful artists than the present race of mountaineers can produce. When they talk of China, however, they merely mean people on the other side of the snowy boundary; and as inscriptions in the Thibetian character have been found in the hills, that nation may have been the builders of the temple.

There is much room for speculation in the study of uncouth figures and incomprehensible letters, and much amusement is derived from its exercise, although no light may be thrown upon them. We are prone to admire most what we least understand. We too frequently lose our enthusiasm as we gain our knowledge; and the traveller, who leaves it to his imagination to read hieroglyphics and form hypotheses, passes his time fully as agreeably, if not more so, than the critic, who, satisfied he knows such things were

for such purposes, has no occasion for the aid of conjecture, or the charms of fancy.

About midway between the temple and Mookba the rain began to fall in torrents, and I found we were too likely to bid adieu to the pleasant scenes we had hitherto enjoyed, for the most uncomfortable of all mountain visitations. We appeared to be riding on the bosoms of the clouds. The road became so slippery as to render the utmost caution necessary, and all around was dark. The vivid lightning, that shot through the mist, was the best light we had to depend on; for the clouds hung so completely around us, above, below, and on every side, that we were at length obliged to abandon the continuation of our journey; and taking shelter under an overhanging rock, which rose from the bosom of the hill above us, we remained about a couple of hours. There was no hope of the storm's cessation; and, afraid of being benighted, we set forth again. It was dark when we reached Suchi; and the tempest had so scattered my party, that I despaired of being housed.

As is generally the case in such predicaments,

the things you least require are nearest at hand. With the voice of an Othello I shouted for my tent—for any thing that could be found—nay, even a handkerchief, if it could be discovered; but without success. The barking of the dogs, with the screaming of the people to still them—the clamour of the nearest coolies for guides and lights—and the uproar of my servants, with occasional claps of thunder, and the rushing of the rain, made the most bewildering tumult that can be conceived. I had been obliged to strip myself of my wet clothes; and, tying a table-cloth about my waist, (the only cover I could find,) sallied forth with a white staff in my hand; and, like a maniac, as I exercised it upon the flying people, or poked them out of the snug covers they had taken to, added to the wildness of the scene.

Although accustomed from principle, and indeed from inclination, to be as passive as possible under the annoyance of Hindoo apathy, I found it difficult to control myself here. There was a humour in the uproar, too, that it was not easy to withstand. After calling till I was hoarse for any portion of my baggage that had arrived, appre-

hending that all had been swept away, to prove that I was not quite destitute, my friend Booth Sing, the most attentive of my coolies, a smart fellow, and a perfect beau in his way, flew in pursuit, and in a few minutes returned, bearing in triumph the trophies of his success—a broken kettle and a frying-pan! "This is all," said he; "but I hope the rest will soon come." It was impossible not to laugh; and when one of the hill-men suggested a use for the frying-pan, by holding it over his head as an umbrella, and then, transferring it to me, recommended me to apply it to that purpose, the ludicrous appearance I already made, with such a finish to my picture, was enough to restore me to good-humour.

I was a match for any fanatic in the East—standing on a crag, surrounded by the villagers squatting like monkeys at my feet—no covering but the draggled table-cloth about me—a dirty white wand in one hand, and the other holding a frying-pan over my head! It was nearly twelve at night before I had collected all that the storm had dispersed. Some of my bearers had fallen, and bruised themselves a good deal; and one,

with a side of my tent, had plumped to the bottom of a pit, from which he contrived to crawl out before midnight; and, coming terrified to relate his calamity to me, assured me his burden must have by this time reached the centre of the earth, for he had never heard it stop. At length, with three sides only to the tent, we contrived to get under cover; and sitting in the centre of it, with our feet upon the pole to keep them out of the wet, and a pan of charcoal below, we were able, (thanks to the war of elements!) to pass the night without sleeping. The canvass and the beds had got so completely soaked, that it would not have been either comfortable or safe to have endeavoured to obtain repose.

Daylight brought no alteration in our affairs; and on the evening of the third day of our being weather-bound, every thing seemed as unpromising as the commencement. On sending in search of the stray part of the tent, I found that the fear of the man had exaggerated the depth of the pit, and it was not very difficult to recover it.

The position in which we are encamped is the

usual choice of the pilgrims, and many are seated about us. We have placed the tent under the branches of a very large walnut-tree, from which, the first night, we expected to gain a little shelter; but being now well washed, it acts as a conduit to pour the water more directly upon us; a little behind is the tent of my servants, in which they sit, as miserable as fowls, around a pool in the middle, which the rain, in dropping through the canvass, has formed. Their wet blankets are wrapped round them; and, notwithstanding the reproaches that their countenances express—for every man seems to say, "Why have you done this?"—I find it impossible to contemplate their situation with the least appearance of gravity.

A small wooden shed, about the size of a wild-beast cage, erected for the use of the faquirs, (three or four men may squat in the middle of it,) is converted into a kitchen; and my Mahometans, drenched to the skin, are endeavouring to cook my dinner at a little smoke in one corner of it; for it is impossible to kindle a flame. The only saucepan I have remaining, instead of a cover, which, in all probability, like Gilpin's wig, will

soon be here, "for why? 'tis on the road," has a cane hat, the crown of which just fits the mouth, stuffed into it. A species of pottage is manufacturing in a broken pot, into which the rain will intrude; and water being the last ingredient it requires, promises to render it the most ultra soup-maigre. My cooks have petitioned to bring it into my tent; and it now boils under the table, that being the driest situation to be found.

I defy the greatest humorist of the day to contrive a more absurd scene than our encampment presents. The faquirs are muttering round their miserable fires, striving to protect their meal from the wet with leaves: some Hindoos are cooking their cakes in the hollow of a tree, which I expect to see rattle about them; and one has just lost his dinner by the roof of his kitchen—a cotton umbrella, flying up into the air with a tin pot hanging from the stick, which had been tied to it in hopes of giving weight. Every person is anxiously watching this balloon, in its eccentric flight, with his person stretched over his mess, lest it should descend upon it and scatter it to the winds.

What the thoughts of my Hindoos may be I

cannot conjecture, but I hope they view their dilemmas as necessary and meritorious trials. My Mahometans, I am convinced by their looks, would sacrifice the chance of Paradise if it were only to be attained through a repetition of such scenes. For myself, I unconsciously break into a whistle of appropriate airs, and detect myself in humming, "Ye gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease," too frequently, not to perceive that it breathes a spirit ill at ease. At night, when the ridiculous of the picture is lost in darkness, every gust of wind threatens to carry my flimsy roof to the clouds—while the thunder echoes from mountain to valley, and valley to mountain, and the flashes of lightning discover the grandeur of the peaks above me, as they thrust their heads through the mist, then shoot through the vapour that hangs over a fathomless abyss before me—masses of rock, loosened by the rain, fall with tremendous noise down its sides—all is, indeed, magnificent, sublime!

June 17th, 18th.—We had been three days at Suchi, and took a fair opportunity on the fourth to make our escape from the first village within

the magic circle of the Ganges' power: we began to fear that we might be affected by its influence, and, spell-bound, be forced to remain till we had mingled with its dust, for, as long as the rain continued, it was impossible to cross the barrier, the passage of which, in fine weather, had so alarmed my people; and unless we could learn to relish rams, we had little chance of surviving a season within it—for our flesh, a buck goat; and for vegetables, the crisped tops of the young forest fern! The natives of the hills, in many parts, use this as a vegetable; but on tasting it once, I thought it too insipid and tough to induce me to adopt it.

On reaching the formidable pass, we had all the difficulty and labour we had apprehended. The common road was so slippery, as to render it dangerous; and on gaining the summit of the rocks we had ascended, we were forced to pause on the brink, all seemed so altered by the rains of the last few days. The trunks of trees were swinging in the gaps, held only by one twig. The planks had been swept down the chasms they were placed across; and at the bottom of

every rock, a pool of water was collected. On shooting down these declivities, we generally splashed into the reservoir below; and when crawling up the next, draggled and miserable, gave an apt representation of the cleanly though uncomfortable punishment of keel-hauling—now, I hope, obsolete.

It took us some time to fasten the ladders, and prepare the bridges; and it was nearly dark when we reached a clear space, on the right bank of the Ganges, where we encamped: the natives named it Dountgul. It was used for the cultivation of red spinach, and stood under a high hill, on which a little village was situated, and many deer were browzing among the trees on its summit. Not long before we came in sight of it, fatigued with our scrambling, we had nearly abandoned the chance of gaining it: in despair we arrived at the top of a rock almost perpendicular, and fifty feet deep. The only method of descending, was by a flat board, resting in a niche at the bottom, and fastened to the root of a tree by a few willow twigs at the top: steps, about big enough for the feet of a monkey, were scooped, at long intervals, in the plank.

We had climbed up by these means, but it was a far different matter to descend. There is an "alacrity in sinking," that made us hesitate for some time to trust ourselves upon it. Our baggage was rolled as well as it could be, to people who were placed at the bottom to receive it; and we were obliged to take advantage of that precaution for ourselves. When half-way down the plank, we were forced (for we could pick our steps no further) to launch our bodies, stretched on their backs, to the foot, where we were caught in safety, with a shout of applause that would have encouraged a mountebank. Dountgul can scarcely be seven miles from Suchi; but it is equal to a distance of at least fifty, in any other part of the world.

June 19th.—Without any other adventure than sticking for two or three hours up to our waists in mud, while attempting to pass over a hill of clay, that lay in our route to Tearoo, we reached that village, and pitched upon the same ground that we had occupied when there before. The next day we set off by daylight to traverse a rocky ridge, that separated us from a range, on the green cape of which stands a beautiful cluster of

cottages—judging from a distance only—called Paloo. Near it we encamped on a stubble-field, where stood many apricot-trees, the fruit nearly ripe. We crossed over two bare and rocky mountains, or rather chains of mountains; and, descending from the height of the latter nearly perpendicularly, to a torrent that divided it from the one we are now on, we found, on passing it, that the temperature had suddenly changed to that of summer: we left every thing bleak and barren, and, in a few hours only, had been transported to a harvest home! The first crop had been reaped, and the second was sown, and in some parts above the ground.

My followers attacked the apricot-trees like locusts; and it was fortunate that some of the fruit was still unripe, or the natives and owners of the property would have had to lament our passage through their country. Although a little surprised at the attack, they bore it very good-humouredly; and the remonstrance of an old man, when one of my coolies, too tired to pick the fruit, broke a well-loaded branch off the tree, delivered in the gentlest accent, and with a manner approaching to dignity, not intended for

me to hear, struck me very forcibly:—"If the children die, God may give the father others; but if the parent fall, there can be no more offspring: take as much fruit as you please, it will grow again, but do not break the tree."

Throughout all parts of the hills, where the apricot thrives, the natives extract an oil from the kernel. A press of the simplest arrangement stands a little without the village, and thither the fruit is carried when ripe, and the stones separated from it. The oil is light-coloured and clear, possessing very little consistency: it does not therefore congeal so rapidly as might be expected in so cold a region. In most of the hills, poppies grow in great number and strength. The inhabitants distil opium, and say they are fond of it, but I never met one in the least degree under its influence: they cannot send it to the plains, from the positive restriction; they must therefore use it among themselves, but I should think very sparingly indeed. They are very fond of the seed of the poppy; and at the time it is in season, you scarcely meet a person that is not provided with several pods-full.

June 20th.—We are so delighted with the

change of scenery, and comparatively level country, that we take very short journeys. To-day we remain at Reithal, which is little more than an hour from Paloo. This village is the best we have met with in the mountains, and the only one in which the people have been anxious that we should remain. It was our intention to have continued to the next, about three miles further; but on our approaching, we were met by the population of the place, with an address of welcome, and a request that we should pitch our tents on a pretty green spot above the village, on one side of which stood a temple to Mahadeo. As the rain still continues throughout, the day, commencing a little before noon, we find it necessary to complete our journey at an early hour.

We encamped close to the porch of the temple, where most of the natives have assembled to gaze upon us. The women, too, have ventured to gratify their curiosity more than they have elsewhere done; and, making their hospitality an excuse, have brought milk and fruit to us; and, having presented it, sit down in groups about us, with silent wonder, observing all our motions. The

people are not much cleaner than the inhabitants of other parts, although, living in a comparatively warm climate, they might undergo the use of cold water without much inconvenience. It is singular that people, so dirty in their own persons and abodes, should be so particular in all that relates to their agriculture. Their fields are prepared for the grain with the utmost care, and kept as clean as it is possible to keep them during the progress of the crop. The paved area, on which the corn is trodden out, would bear to be placed, for cleanliness, by the side of an English threshing-barn. If the wind blows the smallest impurity upon it, it is immediately swept off, even though no corn be ready to be laid upon it.

The harvest is conducted with great mirth; singing and music resound in the valleys, and the labour of carrying home the sheaves seems to be perfectly delighted in. Superstition has its power also; for it is necessary to propitiate an evil spirit, before they venture to put the cattle in to tread out the grain. They pass round the area, and sprinkle the edges of it with turmeric, and the post in the centre to which the animals are fast-

ened. There are other enemies to the corn, that it would be well if they could keep in check by any process so simple.

In passing above a large tract of land, on which the crop seemed ripe enough to reap, I was astonished to see such universal activity as appeared to prevail. There was a person, apparently, at every ear of corn, busily employed in picking out the grain. I could not conjecture the cause of such extraordinary labour; till, on looking through my glass, I found the field was full of monkeys, each standing on its hind legs, and helping itself with the greatest assiduity. I was too well aware of the difficulty of obtaining meal, not to put an end to their repast. I fired a couple of balls above their heads, and set them off, scampering and screaming, to the adjoining trees, which hung over a little brook, by the track of which I had soon after to pass. They were still in the branches, and chattered most discordantly while I walked through their dominions. Some eyed me, as if they suspected me of having been the cause of their interruption and alarm; and, jumping to the boughs above the road, shook them over my head,

and grinned most hideously through them. A few of the oldest, who had their young to protect, came more boldly into the path, as if trying how near they could approach with impunity.

It was necessary to be on the alert, for their manœuvres bore a most threatening aspect. Although the gambols and tricks of the monkeys are highly amusing when viewed from a little distance, there are few things more uncomfortable than to be so surrounded by several hundreds—particularly when, as in my case, the conscience whispers that they have no reason to be pleased with the intrusion. I have heard people boast of shooting them, and finding it capital sport; I never could appreciate the feelings of such men, however. The looks of a monkey in pain are so distressing, and his cries so pitiful, that, putting his near approach in appearance to our own race out of the question, it must be an inhuman spirit that could find pleasure in such amusement. I remember hearing an anecdote of a sportsman in the East having been induced to fire at, and wound a large monkey: one of the boldest of the pack immediately approached him, and, catching hold

of his gun, endeavoured to disarm him. A struggle took place, in which the man of the woods proved the strongest, and bore away his prize. The monkeys had observed the manner in which it had been fired, and attempted to imitate it: at length one succeeded in putting it to his shoulder; and the sportsman, not approving of his own battery being turned against him, commenced to make his retreat—when off went the second barrel of the gun! The recruits, frightened at the noise themselves had made, threw down the cause of it, and flew to the trees; while the intruder narrowly escaped being wounded, and was obliged to abandon his fowling-piece to the future entertainment of the wood-rangers. The natives do not venerate them in any part of the hills; but, nevertheless, they are as fat and sleek as the sacred broods that are met with in the plains.

June 21st and 22nd.—We are now traversing that fertile country we had seen sloping down to the Ganges, from the first height from which we gained a view of that river. From Paloo we have entered a different climate completely: villages appear at every two or three miles apart, and we

pass over comparatively level roads, through terraces well cultivated and sheltered with fruit-trees of every description, the produce of which is now generally ripe. At each village we are presented with apricots and figs, and sometimes peaches; but they are hard and insipid. It is a matter of great emulation among the people, who shall bring most fruit to us; and it seems to be some amusement to them to endeavour to outdo each other in persuading us to eat.

At Ghosali, which is not three miles from Reithal, there is a neat temple, so covered by trees that we were close upon it before we discovered it. Near to this, on a beautiful green lawn, we encamped. The banks of the Ganges are superior in cultivation and in extent to those of any part of the Jumna; the villages are much more populous, and the inhabitants appear more civilized. We are now amply rewarded for our toils in gaining the source of the river, by the pleasant orchards and cleanly villages we are able to encamp near, on its banks. We meet frequently with travellers from the most distant quarters of the mountains, and find ourselves so completely on a high road, that we move merrily along, and hear

news of other worlds at every new place we halt at. This has had a most enlivening effect upon our people; for they bring me with the utmost delight the simplest intelligence, as if it were necessary to have proof that we had not left the limits of their own sphere—a belief, that I was inclined to think more than one felt disposed to indulge in.

We still, in spite of the superior information of the natives of these villages, retain our powers of attraction. We are beset by the curious and the idle as much as we have ever been; and in one or two instances, when we have been pressed to remain among them, it was that they might gain a holiday by the event, and lounge in the neighbourhood of our tents to mimic our manners, and speculate on their meaning.

Although nature is a good school of breeding, and art alone can never accomplish a gentleman, I am disposed to admit that the ease of the former might be advantageously constrained by the curb of the latter. There were many freedoms, and breaches of decorum, not contrary to mountain etiquette, practised in my presence,

that put my forbearance severely to the test—to mention nothing of certain eructations, held in some countries of the East, and those famed for natural politeness, as being in perfect conformity to good manners. I was not a little horrified, when two men, suddenly whipping off their pantaloons, commenced an animated chase, first through the legs of their trowsers, and then along the floor to the very foot of my throne, slaughtering sometimes, and sometimes, with scarcely commendable mercy, replacing the deserters that had ungratefully attempted to quit the spots, perhaps, of their nativity. The Arabs, I have heard, deem it unlucky to be without a living companion of the nature I allude to: the Highlanders of Scotland have some superstition also regarding them; and my Highlanders of "Snowy Imaus" are most decidedly averse to their destruction, or their attempt to forsake the natal soil.

We have quitted the country of pheasants, but we still meet with black partridges; and in my pursuit of the latter, I am ever doomed to be interrupted by the untimely appearance of a bear. I observed a bird at some little distance run into a

small clump of shrubs, and followed it. I began most lustily to beat the bushes with my gun; and crying "whist! whist!" boldly entered the midst of them. A bear stood up on his hind legs, its snout nearly touching my face, as I bent down to disentangle the skirt of my coat from the briers. I started at being brought face to face with the enemy; and not being able to effect a speedy retreat, took off my hat, and waved it before his eyes. We never lose by politeness; and, although I uncapped from a different motive, I was glad to find it had its effect.

The bear ran up the hill, round which one of my servants was winding, and came full upon him. He had a gun in his hand, unloaded, and covered with a woollen bag, which, in his anxiety to defend himself, he had thrust half off: recollecting, however, it was uncharged, he waved the dangling part of the bag in the bear's eyes, as I had done the hat; and shouting "bo! bo!" as loud as he could, scared the animal away. The bear seemed perfectly satisfied at the double ceremony he had met with; and, escaping up the hill, did not venture to return. It seems surprising that we should be able to get rid of a wild

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beast in so simple a manner; but I am convinced that such sudden surprises are frequently more efficacious than open warfare. It is not probable that you will kill at the first shot; and although you may wound mortally, I have no doubt the dying hug of a bear would be as formidable as that of a healthy one. There could be no edification, and not much safety, in the death-bed of a tiger. I would prefer therefore adopting some *ruse*, to placing myself in the predicament of partaking in his dying throes.

Some years ago, I was acquainted with an officer who got rid of a bear in a still more singular manner. He was pursued by one when in the jungle of Ceylon, separated from his companions, and having no weapon with him. He had a bottle of brandy slung across his body, and on finding the bear close in his rear, he drew it forth like another Falstaff, and struck the enemy a back-handed blow with it on the head. The bottle broke; and the spirit streaming down his face, got into his eyes, and effectually stopped the pursuit. I have mentioned the great faith placed by natives in the external use of brandy: this ap-

plication of it, however, could scarcely have entered into their contemplation.

Our next step was to the village of Neithall. It is six miles from Ghosali and a little above the river, situated on a hill, at the foot of which we encamped. We passed through a populous and merry country, well cultivated with rice. In the present stage of that grain, it is far from agreeable to roam through the fields; and at no time is the face of the country beautified by such a crop! The valleys seem now to be lakes: the rice is almost half grown, and nearly lost in water; the terraces are divided by narrow ridges, over which it is necessary to creep cautiously one by one—for wo to the clumsy traveller who steps into the bog beside him!

At one period of its growth the rice crop is transplanted, and the ground undergoes a species of turning up, that presents a most singular scene. A number of loose cattle are turned into the field, and driven by the voice of the farmer in every direction through it. Some of them sink so deeply, that it is difficult to recover them; the splashing of the animals, and the shouting of the men to

cheer them on, afford a contrast to the wild singing of the women, as they gather the plants.

The pipe and the tom-tom are unceasing accompaniments; and the vale resounds all day with every variety of noise and merriment. Then, as before, the *improvisatrice* were women, and we were the themes of their songs. We were able to catch some of their ideas; and as they will not always bear a literal interpretation, I have ventured to arrange the purest in a free one. The feats of the white men were the unchanging and apparently inexhaustible subjects: the fancy of one singer called forth the ideas of another, and when each had afforded a line, they seized upon the one they most approved of, and gave it as a fearfully emphatic chorus. "*Sahib Logue,*" which properly signifies "gentlemen," I have translated by the term with which I have no doubt it is constantly associated in the minds of the singers.

THE WHITE MEN.

Lo! the white men have been to the mountains of snow,
And have seen the great Gunga flow over the plain:
Let us labour no more, for the rice crop will grow;
The white men must always bring wealth in their train.

See the white men are smiling; the maids they adore
Are far, far away, in the realms of the west.
Do they smile upon us?—we will labour no more;
When the white men are happy, their servants are blest.

See, the tents are all spread—they have kindled the fires,
And the travellers will rest in the valley to-day.
We will labour no more; all the white man desires
We will hasten to offer, and court him to stay.

Collins, in one of his Oriental Eclogues, makes his hero stray through rice fields—

"What time 'tis sweet o'er fields of rice to stray."

Had he tried the experiment himself, I think he would hardly have sent him upon so uncomfortable an expedition.

Travelling is often sadly matter of fact: it is too prone to remove the veil that poetry has thrown over scenery. It is better, for the purposes of a poet, to view objects through the imagination; and the traveller, who is fortunate enough to be able to see through the same medium, has an additional pleasure in his researches that the more short-sighted one cannot know. Nothing can be more stupid than a high road and a guide-book. It is ludicrous, though perhaps commendable enough, to see (as I doubt not many continental travellers have done) a fat elderly gentleman, with the drops of perspiration trickling down his cheeks, as he toils up a hill to enable him to say he has been on its summit, pause in the midst of the most beautiful scenery to fumble about the leaves of his Tourist's Guide, and read the description of some demolished windmill; and, having ascertained its 'whereabouts,' with as much glee as if he had discovered a land-mark in a dangerous voyage, pass on to the critically laid down position of a lime-kiln, and reap from the correctness of his book, the pleasures a less precise traveller would draw from the charms of the landscape, or the recollections of the spot.

Thanks to the thin partitions that divide some of Mr. Meurice's rooms, I once became privy to the studies of a worthy pair, who occupied an adjoining chamber to me, during their visit to the well-explored city of Paris. At six o'clock every morning, with the most praiseworthy perseverance, did the good easy man read a chapter from his guide-book to his attentive spouse, and endeavour to arrange the labours for the day. This was no easy matter; for she, upholding a privilege of choice, was for courts and camps; while he, deeming it dignified in a male traveller to be something of a *virtuoso,* maintained the superiority of statues and columns. As the arguments were loud and long, it was not my fault that I overheard them.

A French *savant* left unexplored the ruins of Thebes because he caught a glimpse of an English maid-servant in a pink spencer, contemplating a sphinx. I do not mean to justify his flight, but positively such a spectre was enough to scare his sublime sensations. I wish to uphold the dignity of travel, and I have been led into these remarks by that desire. Such *mal-à-propos* meetings can

never tend to increase the mental pleasure or extend the researches. The boldest sportsman would fly if a lion entered a drawing-room: the keenest antiquary would withdraw in despair if he saw an Abigail scratching her name in the tomb of Osymandias: 'tis the fitness of things that constitutes the enjoyment.

CHAPTER V.

Reputed source of the Ganges—A miracle—A frail fair-one—The lord of Burkotee—The faquir's festival—Sacred temple Women, the source of evil—Agreeable repast—Simple fare—Village of Matlee—Mountain breezes—Right of possession—Route to Dhoondah—Creed of the Hindoos—Religious martyrs—Arrival at Patthora—Annoyances of flies—Agriculture—Uncomfortable shoes—Cedar tree—Sacred plants—Tyranny over servants—Situation of Barrehtee—Faquir tribute—Valley of Chinalli—The "happy valley"—Venomous serpents—Wild honey.

JUNE 23rd.—We passed for several miles through rice, or more properly along the furrows that divided the fields, and had a full opportunity of admiring the manner of irrigation followed by the natives; for we were too often obliged not only to experience the breadth, but the depth of their drains. They have the advantage, from the many rills that descend from the heights above them, of being able to draw water down to their grounds; no great ingenuity,

therefore, is requisite. Their channels are, however, cut with great care, and arranged with much skill; every terrace takes its turn of the water from the upper one to the lowest. In the island of Ceylon the same mode of watering the ground exists; and there a law prevents the owner keeping his land wet beyond a certain time, and to the prejudice of his neighbour.

We found the valley as happy as ever, and walked through it to the sound of music. We encamped a little beyond the village of Barahat, which I have already named as the reputed source of the Ganges in the second age of the world. It retains still its character for sanctity in the estimation of the Hindoos. It lies so directly in the route to all the most holy places in the mountains, that it is constantly haunted by the miserable objects that toil their weary way to the many shrines that lead to Indra's heaven.

A temple, in the wooden porch of which a number of faquirs were collected, stands in a square spot within the village under the shadow of a large peeput-tree, within the hollow trunk of which many emblems of mythology are heaped up; and to this *sanctum sanctorum* I must attri-

bute a legend my guide to Gungoutri related to me. The celebrated saint of Nanguan erected this temple for his family worship. Soon after it was completed he quarrelled with his mother, and forbade her to enter it for prayer. She, by virtue, I suppose, of her son's piety, has contrived to be immortal, and endeavours to penetrate every day to its mysteries. The moment she appears, which is always at the dawn of day, the door closes, and baffles all human power to open it. The father of the saint, a pious and deserving parent, who probably gained his son's esteem by taking his part against his mother, has the privilege of breaking the spell. He comes to his devotions every evening; and at his "Open—Sesame," the door obeys, and grants him free admission. The natives of Barahat did not seem aware of the great miracle so constantly wrought in their village; but I think it too ingenious a tale to omit, particularly as my friend the Brahmin concluded it in his usual manner, by affirming he never told lies. A moral, however, lurks in the story. It would be unjust to the saint and his miracle to suppress the conduct of the lady, that induced him to exclude her from the temple.

Nanguan is not far from the castle of Burkotee, where, in the olden time, dwelt a formidable chieftain; his manner of living was so splendid, that he excited the envy of the neighbouring men, and (the truth must be told) the love of the surrounding fair. Among his most devoted admirers was the mother of our saint: she was used in her own mind to contrast his riches and luxurious fare with the simple diet and hard labour of her own home. She was beautiful, and had the gift to know it; and she felt that she had attracted the notice of the powerful lord of Burkotee. One day, while she filled her pitcher at the banks of the Jumna, and within sight of the castle she sighed to be mistress of, she reasoned gravely within her mind what course she should pursue. "Why should I draw water," thought she, "when the ladies of Burkotee have so many handmaids to attend upon them? I am as delicate as they are;" and placing her earthen pitcher on her head, in a fatal moment took her resolution to submit to such drudgery no longer: scarcely was the rebellious determination formed, when the vessel broke, and the water streamed about her figure. Now her husband was a poor man, and

could not afford to have pitchers broken by carelessness. He scolded his wife severely, and would not believe her when she said it burst of its own accord while resting quietly on her head. Her son, a more subtle personage, exclaimed,—"O mother! what wicked thoughts must those have been that even made the pitcher break!" She resolutely swore that no vice had entered her mind; but her countenance belied the assertion, and the saint charged her directly with the criminal intention of abandoning his father's house for the castle of Burkotee; then, taking her by the hand, led her to the door, and vowed she never should pollute its threshold more! He determined, however, that she should not pass to the Chief, whose gold had won her heart, and confined her in a cave within the mountains on his own banks of the river.

"The bold Baron" was not to be intimidated by a Saint; and, discovering her retreat, crossed with a large force, and bore her to his own hall. The poor son was obliged to adopt a *ruse* to recover his mother from her disgraceful predicament; and, feigning to forgive her and her paramour, invited them to a

banquet in the valley of Nanguan. The villagers thought he was mad. How could a faquir give a feast to the greatest man in the mountains? The chief of Burkotee anticipated much fun, and the lady of his love was horrified at the idea of his being fed with the coarse cakes that had so materially assisted in estranging her affections from the husband of her youthful choice.

The day arrived, and a mighty host accompanied the Chief to the faquir's festival. Their landlord stood alone in the valley, naked, and unconscious of the gathering company. No fires were kindled, no meal was baked, and not a goat had bled. The wrath of Burkotee's master was unbounded: he was on the point of sacrificing the Saint to his disappointment—when, lo! a sudden storm seemed to darken the vale, and the pious landlord moved forward to welcome his guests; bands of spirits descended on the green, and spread a rich and plenteous feast upon it. It was not to be enjoyed in peace, however; for the commissariat was followed by a numerous army that attacked and beat the soldiers of the wicked lord. He himself was slain, and the woman, the cause of all, was recovered by her indignant son. He soon

after removed to Barahat, and built the temple that subjects his mother to such constant mortification.

The Brahmin was very precise in his narration, even to the description of the food, and the men and arms that the Saint had so speedily mustered. I confess to having visited the temple at the time that it should close against the admission of the lady, and watched in vain for some change in its appearance. My profane presence, I feared, must have had the sad effect of giving her free ingress to the sanctuary; for no barrier presented itself at the usual time. After due search, however, I was relieved to find a sufficient reason, at least for an unbeliever—there was no door! This little dilemma would but increase the miracle in the devout confidence of my friend the Brahmin, who seemed highly pleased at the punishment of the woman; for he partook largely in the orthodox belief of the East, that no evil can take place of which a woman is not the first cause.

"Who is she?" a rajah was always in the habit of asking, whenever a calamity was related to him, however severe, or however trivial. His

attendants reported to him one morning that a labourer had fallen from a scaffold when working at his palace, and had broken his neck—"Who is she?" immediately demanded the rajah. "A man; no woman, great prince!" was the reply. "Who is she?" repeated with increased anger, was all the rajah deigned to utter. In vain did the servants assert the manhood of the labourer. "Bring me instant intelligence what woman caused this accident, or wo upon your heads!" exclaimed the prince. In an hour the active attendants returned; and, prostrating themselves, cried out, "O wise and powerful prince!"—"Well, who is she?" interrupted he. "As the ill-fated labourer was working on the scaffold, he was attracted by the beauty of one of your Highness's damsels; and, gazing upon her, lost his balance, and fell to the ground."—"You hear, now," said the prince, "no accident can happen, without a woman, in some way, being an instrument."

Barahat is beautifully situated in an extensive valley, bounded by high mountains, at the base of the southern range of which flows the Ganges.

Their summits are crowned with pines, and a great variety of fruit-trees adorn the sides. Throughout the vale many are also scattered; and the figs and barberries being quite ripe, give a delicious treat, as we pluck them on our way: we carry our morning share of wheaten cakes in our pockets, and find the most agreeable breakfast waiting us, by the banks of every running brook.

I have learned more of the kindly disposition of my followers, by adopting this mode of breakfasting, than I should probably have had an opportunity of doing by a more substantial meal. They never fail to pick the most tempting of the fruit for us, as they pass the trees, declaring that they must be the best judges of their own country productions; and whenever those before us find a pleasant shade and clear fountain, they spread our repast upon leaves by its side. I have seen them, when the drops of perspiration were coursing each other down their breasts, refuse to touch a fig till we had chosen for ourselves, and eaten; indeed, they appeared so grieved when we relaxed in our luscious labour, that we fre-

quently were loth to vex them by a pause. I know no sensual gratification equal to such a scene.

We divided our banquet with the birds: there was plenty, however, for all; for many a blooming fruit-tree is doomed 'to waste its sweetness on the desert air.' I would recommend the luxurious slave, who cannot coax an appetite with all the means and appliances of the profound art of cookery, to try our simple fare; let him sally forth at daylight in the morning, a piece of brown bread in his pocket, and sit under a fig-tree, when he feels fatigued, a fountain as clear as glass near him—if he does not seek to return to it again and again, he is only fit to sicken and to die!

The grain, excepting the rice, had been cut down: all the fields were every where full of partridges; and thousands of doves, of the most various and beautiful hues, gave us every means of supplying our table, if we had the hearts to kill them. We did not feel disposed, however, to rob the tuneful grove of one of its choir. They almost approached near enough to take food from us; and they looked upon us from the lowest

branches with so calm a confidence, that we could not muster courage to pull the trigger against them. The kokila, a large green bird with a yellow breast, cooes in the sweetest manner. There were many of them in the surrounding trees; and my servants (for they may eat certain birds) assured me they made most delicious food.

The village of Barahat, though a great thoroughfare, differs in no respect in its arrangement from those situated further up the country, nor does its holiness promote its cleanliness.

June 24th, 25th.—We reached in a few hours, having passed over a valley of rice similar to the former ones, the village of Matlee. It lies to the west of Barahat, and stands in the centre of a pretty plain, a little removed from the banks of the Ganges. It is the remote corner of the vale, of which Barahat is the centre—which is rather too much of a summer climate for the long walks we are forced to take, and we sigh to reach the summits of the hills again. It is not always possible, however, to make a choice: the bordering ridges are not long enough to continue to travel

upon them; and the constant necessity for descending and ascending, is scarcely repaid by the brief feelings of pleasure imparted by the elevation.

Transient as it must be, however, there are few pleasures equal to it. The air on the mountain heights is so exhilarating, that fatigue is entirely impossible; and from the lightness of my spirits immediately after a change from the close atmosphere of the valleys, I sometimes fear that I may commit extravagancies, likely to shake the opinion the natives hold of our dignity and importance. It has a similar effect upon them, however; and the moment they deposit their burdens, they fly like wild goats over the crags in pursuit of berries, or in search of water.

The arrival of our little party on its ground is a most animating scene. After having performed the duty of quarter-master-general, we retire to the shadow of a neighbouring tree, and wait till all is arranged: each coolie fixes his own particular part of the tent, or places in a suitable spot his own load. It is amusing to observe how tenacious they are upon this matter; no man will

suffer another to interfere with him, and it has often happened that I have been obliged to settle a dispute about the lacing of my tent, when the bearers of two adjoining portions differed, with whom the duty lay of threading what they were pleased to consider a neutral loop.

Being, as I have noticed, already divided into parties, it was a matter of importance to the first who arrived, to get rid of their duty, and secure a place for their messmates. A race generally takes place towards the most inviting spot; and the one who succeeds in fixing his blanket first at the goal, wins it for his comrades: this right of possession is never disputed; and the losers of the first-gained position make a race for the next, and continue till all are properly arranged. This emulation is conducted with the most rigid justice; and as every one must deliver his load before he ventures to choose, they start fair for the chase: no man dare throw his blanket of possession in passing the most inviting bower with his burden on his back—no, he must finish one course before he enters on another.

Our sojourn at Matlee has been too bright and

sunny, to afford any incident: in rosy bowers all must be calm and sweet. Where there is nothing but delight, there can be little interest. It is indeed too true that, 'man is made to mourn:' for no mind (though it may look like a paradox) can be happy in the midst of perpetual pleasure:

> The keenest pangs the wretched find
> Are rapture to the dreary void—
> The leafless desert of the mind,
> The waste of feelings unemploy'd.
> Who would be doom'd to gaze upon
> A sky without a cloud or sun?

We had the good fortune to have our route varied a little to Dhoondah: we wound by the banks of the river, passing occasionally over rocks; and gained the summit of a little hill, on which we are placed. The Ganges winds, from a short distance beyond Matlee, suddenly to the south. The neighbourhood of our present position is well cultivated, and the people improve, particularly the fair sex, who really merit that distinction, in appearance greatly. The besetting sin of dirtiness, however, still holds a firm seat among their characteristic faults; and so perfectly unused are

they to the luxury of water, or the use of it, beyond the one of drinking, that it is sometimes difficult to ascertain the natural colour of the skin for the case that hides it.

Our servants, who are as much in the other extreme, are horrified to a degree; and would not take meat or drink from them to save their lives, even if the hill-men were invested with the Brahminical thread. "I would not drink water from a Pariah if I were perishing on a rock," says my Sirdar, who is a native of Orissa, from the neighbourhood of Juggernaut. Such is the high feeling of a Hindoo: the devotion to a false creed of such people, who will perish rather than break the smallest of its commands, even when self-preservation might suggest an excuse, is indeed the most difficult problem of human nature.

The two lowest castes, the husbandmen and mechanics, equally scrupulous as the priests and the soldiers, are heroes in no other way. From their possession of every quality opposed to heroism in other respects, they are the last of the human race I should select as capable of such devotion. The true Rajpoot is a noble creature, and the Brahmin

I am not disposed to impeach. It is indeed strange that a coward in all matters, and a knave in most, will submit to the extremest suffering with the highest fortitude. A weak woman, however, fires the pile with a serene countenance that is in a few minutes to consume her. Happily for the Christian world, the days when martyrdom was necessary are gone by. Should any one of the present age, however, be disposed to listen with incredulity or ridicule to the tales of suffering that have been handed down to us in the cause of religion, they may draw too clear a corroboration of the patient endurance the human mind is capable of, under the severest torments, from the sad scenes acted every day in the East.

Between Barahat and Matlee we crossed over a bridge that seemed, as we approached it, to be suspended in the air. It rested upon wooded banks, on each side of the river; the cranes from which it hung were so lost among the trees, as to render it doubtful what supported the flimsy structure. It was a narrow chain of ropes, scarcely less difficult than the bridge upon which the Mahometans are doomed to skait into Paradise; a yawning

Phlegethon below to receive us, if our consciences betrayed us on the passage. At the bottom, about a yard asunder, were small pieces of wood to step on, and necessary to prevent the bridge gathering about you as a net, which, when the wind blew strongly, (as it did on our passage,) they even could not prevent. It had the disadvantage of being fully one hundred yards long. A herd of cattle were crossing a little below us; and to avoid their being carried away by the force of the current, a rope was passed over the river, and fastened to trees on each side. The animals were driven in above it, and kept in their course by the management of the line.

June 26.—We ascended from Dhoondah to a village called Patthora, over a steep ridge covered with fir-trees—a distance of nearly seven miles. It is situated on the crest of a line of hills, where there is very little wood, and all around is well cultivated. The mountains form a large circle, sloping gradually to a river at the bottom of the range we are on. The Ganges, of which we just catch a glimpse, flows to the south-east: on the brows of the hills are a great many villages; and

the fields of corn, some being reaped, and others ploughed, give a picturesque and animated appearance to the scene. Since the day we reached Barahat, we have had no rain; and it has been this morning excessively hot. The thermometer has been generally from 98° to 100°.

We are fortunate in not being so much annoyed by stinging insects as we were in the closer vales on the shores of the Jumna; but equal plagues assail us. The common flies assemble in such multitudes about us, that we find it impossible to keep them from the interior of the tent with all the arrangements we are capable of making. I am not certain but they are as annoying to the full as the wasps and the musquitoes: we have a respite, to be sure, at night; but during the day we cannot rest a moment. We undergo, in effect, the torments of Tantalus; for when we raise the cup to our lips, some dozen unlucky flies tremble for a moment in the steam, and drop into the tea before it can reach them. In wine, in water, it is equally the same: we can never venture to drink without a spoon in the hand, to skim the drowning insects from the glass; and even then we must

gratify our thirst at the expense of a mouthful of flies.

The road we wound up to Patthora being excessively steep, we arrived a considerable time before our baggage, and lay down upon the grass beneath a group of walnut-trees that surrounded the ruins of a temple thickly overrun by ivy. It was a beautiful mound, and stood below the village, the only green spot in a wide circle of fallow fields. An old man and two little children were driving the plough through the one at our feet. The machine was so light, that they were obliged to stand upon a board fixed above the share, to give it weight to cut the earth. The moment the old man observed us, he whispered something to the children and sent them to the village, while he drew near to pay his respects to us. The boy and girl soon returned, bearing a bowl of milk and a branch of barberries, which, with the best grace in the world, (for they had "learnt the luxury of doing good,") in the school of Nature, they presented to us. They seemed sufficiently thanked by the delight with which we hailed it; for it was grown extremely hot, and

the water-spring was half a mile off. Such simple actions speak volumes in favour of the natives of this part of the mountains. I have found them much superior, not only to the inhabitants of the higher ranges, but even to those who live on a level with themselves by the margin of the Jumna.

To-day our situation is much cooler than it has been, and we enjoy a temperature of 10 and 12 degrees less than we found in the valley below. The severe journeys over rough and pointed rocks, with the frequent necessity of wading through swamps and rivulets, have nearly reduced us to a bare-footed pilgrimage. We have fortunately found shoes in these villages, to which nothing but a last resource could reconcile us. The soles are composed of dried leather, several folds of which are fastened together by thongs, which, passing through them, are tied in knots at the bottom; a knitting of common string, reaching to the ancle and fitting quite close to the foot, serves the purpose of an upper-leather. The sole is so hard, that it is no easy matter to walk any distance in them without being well bruised.

The natives very seldom use them; and we have scarcely met with a dozen pair in the hills. They are made, I believe, in the kingdom of Nepaul, from which every thing employed in arts or arms seems also to come.

We have seen some men supplied with cookeries, and the curved knife of the Ghorka; but such weapons are very rare. In the higher regions, where wood is much used in building, I have witnessed the progress of a house, in the construction of which but one instrument was employed—a very small one—a hatchet, having the head flat for the purposes of a hammer. Where nails would be requisite, pegs of wood are substituted, although they are seldom needed, the planks being always laid into each other by grooves. The timber of the Deo Dhar (Cedar), a sacred tree, is usually applied to building. It is very soft and easily worked, and grows to a prodigious size. The shadow of one of these trees is commonly chosen for the site of a temple. I have seen them of thirty feet and more in circumference and towering to a great height. This tree, I fancy, as the

Ganges and other rivers also must, owes its sanctity to its use.

There are throughout the mountains many of the sacred shrubs of the Hindoos, which give great delight, as my servants fall in with them. They pick the leaves; and running with them to me, cry, "See, sir, see, our holy plants are here!" and congratulate each other on having found some indication of a better land than they are generally inclined to consider the country of the Pariahs. The happiness these simple remembrances shed over the whole party is so enlivening, that every distress and fatigue seems to be forgotten. When we behold a servant approaching with a sprig of the *Dona* in his hand, we hail it as the olive-branch, that denotes peace and good-will for the rest of the day, if, as must sometimes be the case, they have been in any way interrupted.

Even these little incidents speak so warmly in favour of the Hindoo disposition, that, in spite of much that may be uncongenial to an European in their character, they cannot fail to inspire him with esteem, if not affection. I wish that many of my countrymen would learn to believe that the

natives are endowed with feelings, and surely they may gather such an inference from many a similar trait to the one I have related. Hardness of heart can never be allied to artless simplicity: that mind must possess a higher degree of sensibility and refinement, that can unlock its long-confined recollections by so light a spring as a wild flower.

I have often witnessed, with wonder and sorrow, an English gentleman stoop to the basest tyranny over his servants, without even the poor excuse of anger, and frequently from no other reason than because he could not understand their language. The question, from the answer being unintelligible, is instantly followed by a blow. Such scenes are becoming more rare, and indeed are seldom acted but by the younger members of society; they are too frequent notwithstanding: and should any thing that has fallen from me here, induce the cruelly disposed to reflect a little upon the impropriety and mischief of their conduct, when about to raise the hand against a native, and save one stripe to the passive people who are so much at the mercy of their masters' tempers, I shall indeed be proud.

June 27.—From Patthora we made one long descent to the banks of the Ganges: it was a steep path, and occasionally wound through a wood of great richness. We reached the river just where it makes a sweep to the south; and on the bend, or a little above it, we found a neat temple to Mahadeo: it was singularly clean; and an old man, who seemed to have the care of it, sat like a statue at the gate, with his eyes fixed upon the sun: a large white beard hung down to his breast, and his string of beads lay upon his hand. He was the most venerable, but immoveable person I ever saw. We were not disposed to interrupt one who seemed so perfectly indifferent to us, and left him unmolested, to his reflections.

We followed the right bank of the river, among figs and apricot-trees, and along hedges of barberries, till we reached the village of Barrehtee. It was situated at the entrance of a rich valley, which stretched for a long distance before us, bounded by wild crags on one side, and on the other by the holy stream, which was here marked by one of the largest temples we have met with. The interior of it formed a Dhurrumsalah, or resting-place, that might contain fifty people: it was a

square, wooden platform, supported on posts, and sheltered by a canopy of the shape of a pagoda. It hung over the river; and we were glad to take advantage of the repose it offered, while our people pushed further into the valley, to fix our little city.

There were a few faquirs in Barrehtee on their way to Gungoutri, and they were busy in collecting their tribute of food from the villagers. "*Ram, Ram,*" is the only word they utter, sometimes striking the hollow gourd they carry in their hands. Each person, as they arrive opposite the cabins, brings out his offering, and they are not long in thus gathering a meal: some persons give sticks, and one produces a light; and the devout are soon busy in the preparation of their savoury messes.

When we pursued our route to Chinalli, where we proposed halting, I soon discovered, notwithstanding our delay at Barrehtee, that we were likely to reach it before our carriers. The baggage was lying deserted on the ground a little within the vale, and the bearers were amusing themselves in the branches of the mango-trees,

which, for the first time, we had met with in the mountains. The fruit was not ripe, but the people found it too attractive to pass. The trees were very large, and the fruit promised to be so likewise.

In the Valley of Chinalli, the mango thrives very well indeed. It was introduced by the Nepaulese; and an old man in the village remembers the seed being put into the ground: he may be about sixty years of age. Many small plants are scattered about, that have sprung from the falling of the seed; and, in course of time, this pretty valley promises to be one large mango grove. It is so enclosed by mountains, that we have found it oppressively hot; the thermometer in the shade has been at 98° all day. The natives produce remarkably good onions, for which the soil seems well adapted: they also have been introduced from a foreign climate; but as the people are very fond of them, they are likely to be naturalised in this part of the hills.

The vale is more extensive and more beautiful than any we have traversed within the mountains; so like is it, in every respect, to the "Happy Valley" in which Rasselas was confined, that there

is scarcely a particular in that description, that does not apply to the Valley of Chinalli. The kid and the monkey are to be seen every where; but here alone, as if to realise the picture in all points, have we found "the solemn elephant reposing in the shade." The rajah of Tirhee possesses four; and finding the climate of his own city too cold for them, sends them into the neighbouring valleys to enjoy a more genial air. Two are quartered on Chinalli: they do not look very well; and I fear they fare but indifferently. They lead an idle life, however, passing the sunny hours (and all the day is sun-shine) beneath the branches of a mango-tree.

We chose a spot to encamp on, that seemed to have been cut on purpose near the summit of the mountain that bounded the plain: it was well sheltered; and beside it (which tempted us to fix there) fell a large body of water, that, crossing the plain, assisted in its irrigation, and lost itself in the river. Our servants took possession of a spacious cave, the mouth of which was overgrown by blackberries, ripe and tempting; and from our position we could overlook the happy

valley: there were many small villages in it. We had descended from a height to its level, and there was no way of escaping from it, but by ascending a greater one: like land lakes, these unconnected spots stand, entirely surrounded by mountains. Every thing required by the inhabitants is found within them: they seek no pleasures beyond what they produce, and know no sorrows that do not spring directly from themselves.

"Though all the blessings of nature are collected," its evils are not quite "extracted and excluded." We disturbed, while they were basking in the sun, two venomous serpents; one I was able to kill, the other escaped: they were both nearly four feet long. The one that made off, we fancied was a *cobra capella*, and watched its doubtful windings through the grass, over which we were walking with much apprehension: the dead one was of a light blue colour, and very thin; our guide declared a bite was fatal. I did not know its name; and the native one is of so unpronounceable a description, that I never could succeed in spelling it.

Among the sweets of the valley, we found an abundance of very good honey; it is made from the wild jasmin, and has a peculiarly delicious flavour. In every part of the hills we have met with it in great perfection and quantity—indeed alluring enough to seduce to luxury more hardy wanderers than ourselves. So excellent is it, that we have it mixed in our bread, and use it as a substitute for sugar on all occasions.

CHAPTER VI.

Old Man of the Mountain—Singular circumstance—Descent into a cave—An unexpected visiter—Party of Ghorkas—Mode of carrying children—Management of children—Village of Moralie—Dismal journey—Velocity of sound—Opinion of an echo—Deserted temple—Desolate scene—Route of Landour—Fragile habitations—The cholera morbus—Its ravages—Arrival at Landour—Terrific thunder-storm—Perilous situation—Effects of the lightning—Blindness in sheep—Amusements—The ordeal—Quarrels—Extraordinary request—A jealous husband—The penitent wife—Female peasantry—Condition of servants—Fatal jealousy—Custom of divorce—The rejected villager—Valley of the Dhoon—Magnificent sun-rise.

JUNE 28th.—On leaving the "Happy Valley," we bid farewell to the sacred river; and, passing over a high ridge to the north-west, descended through a dark wood to a stream that divided it from a still higher one, on the summit of which

stands Lalloorie. The village is perched upon a peak that overhangs the centre of the hill, and seems to be perpendicularly above us. We wound round and round for two long hours, sometimes out of sight of the much-desired goal, and at others so near, that it was mortifying in the extreme to turn again from it; for, like the cup on the rainbow, the nearer we seemed to approach, the more difficult was it to attain. We at length reached it, and found but three miserable houses by the side of a large tract of rice, so covered with water, that we took it for a lake, and expected to find trout.

The hospitality and attention of the old Man of the Mountain was beyond all we had elsewhere experienced: he came a part of the way down to meet us, and, seeing us considerably exhausted, forced us to rest wherever he thought there was an agreeable place; cutting the long grass that grew around, and spreading it for a couch for us to recline on. His companions were equally anxious for our comfort; and we had no occasion to ask for anything. Milk and curds, with figs and barberries, were immediately spread before us, and we soon forgot the hardships of the way. The spot where the houses stand, with the rice

ground about, is the only level space within sight. Higher mountains surround the one on which this little plain stands, and lower hills follow each other to the base of it.

It was very late in the day before our baggage made its appearance; but beneath the shadow of a tree with a bed of rushes, and the old man to converse with, (for he would not leave us alone,) we had no cause for impatience. He seemed to consider it a high breach of manners to abandon us for an instant to ourselves; and when any mighty matter called him away, he brought a substitute, and introduced him to our notice with perfect ease, and directed him to watch our movements, and attend to our comforts.

In the evening we were agreeably startled at hearing a shot at no great distance from us; and immediately returned it, hoping that some stray sportsman might be in search of a shelter: a second followed our own shot, and we made the mountains echo with our voices. The people of the village, pleased with the chance of seeing how the "Sahib Logue" meet, flew in pursuit, and our little camp was instantly animated and happy. But the search for the cause of our bustle proved

fruitless; and we passed the remainder of the evening in vain speculation upon the author of the report. Who could fire a gun, where guns were never seen but in the hands of Europeans?

June 29.—Soon after we had commenced our journey this morning, it began to rain in the most pitiless manner I had ever experienced. We had to pass over three successive hills, the ascents to which were remarkably steep: on their summits were level meadows, well planted around, with many herds of deer browzing upon them. The paths were so slippery, it was nearly impossible to move over them; and we were so enveloped in clouds that we could not seek more widely for a surer footing.

On arriving at the point of a projecting crag, that was well concealed by brambles, I mistook the path, not observing the termination of the road from the many plants about it. I made a sudden descent through them to a cave below, that fortunately was not deeper than six or seven feet from the crest that overhung it. I thought I had plunged through a trap-door to the subterranean habitation of a banditti. The storm was howling along the glens; and the black clouds were curl-

ing over the brow of the precipice on which the cavern hung. Nothing could be wilder, or more magnificent than the scenery; and when a party of half-naked savages started on their feet, one of them holding a gun in his hand, I seemed so completely in the brigand's cave, that I felt some disappointment that they did not secure me, and seize upon my possessions.

In one corner of the cave sat a woman blowing the fire through a reed: a little girl knelt near her, kneading up some cakes; while a boy, of about six years of age, was engaged, at no great distance from them, in polishing the cooking-pots with the dust that lay beside him. The woman was tall and thin; and so fair, that she might have been a bandit's bride among the hills of Europe. She had been out in the rain, and her black hair was hanging loose about her shoulders: a white robe was thrown, in the graceful manner of the Hindôo women, over her person; and she formed so picturesque a figure, that an artist or a novelist would have been glad to have seized her as a model.

There were three men, who had been stretching their listless length along the ground, awaiting

the completion of their meal, until my unexpected arrival had called them to their feet. The one that bore the gun was lying near the skin of a bear, which was pegged into the earth for the purpose of drying: this accounted for the shot of the evening before. I learned from them that they were a party of Ghorkas, who had formerly been in the northern Himalaya; and, having connected themselves with some of the inhabitants, had returned from Nepaul to visit them, and were now on their way back to their own country, some village not very far from Katmando. I sent one of them out to look for my brother, who had lingered behind me in the ascent; and, on his reaching the cave, we determined to remain in it till the rain was abated. This adventure (for I may call it so, although the catastrophe was so tame) furnished something more than an outline from which the imagination might fill up any appalling or interesting picture that it pleased: I was as well satisfied that the conclusion was left to my fancy; for I do not seek either "to point a moral, or adorn a tale."

My newly-acquired companions were merely resting until it was fair enough to proceed; and on the first glimpse of sun-shine we sallied forth

together. I perceived, when we began to move, an addition to our party that I had not before noticed: a little baby, that had been fast asleep in a corner during our stay in the cave, wrapped up in its blanket, was hoisted upon its father's back; and, well accustomed to that mode of travelling, seemed perfectly at its ease. The man bore it as he would have done a common bundle; and, tying the ends of the blanket across his chest, took no further notice of his burden. The little thing occasionally pushed its black head through a hole in the top of its nest; and, looking good-humouredly around, appeared conscious that impatience was useless, quietly drew it in again, and composed itself to sleep. When the elder boy was tired, his mother jerked him up, and placed him astride upon her hip. This latter is the most common way of carrying children throughout the East; and, however uncomfortable it may appear to us, they almost seem to lounge in the position: the mother throws out her hip for the child to rest upon, and never even lends a hand to support it. It is necessary for the child, in order to keep its seat, to be perfectly upright; and this early discipline is doubtless one of the

causes of the natives of the East being so straight.

It is singular how easy the parents in warm climates find it to manage their offspring: from the time they are born they seem to care little about them, bearing them with them through all weather, and in all occupations. They throw them indifferently on the grass, if they are working in the fields; and if travelling, they pack them in a basket, and swing them from one end of a bamboo, to balance a bundle of cooking-pots hanging from the other, which they carry over their shoulders. It is curious to see babes of a few months old, bearing all these early vicissitudes with as much philosophy and apathy, as in after-life they do the more serious sufferings that "flesh is heir to." They are trained to Stoicism from the cradle.

We at length crossed all the high hills, and gained the village of Moralie, which stands on the southern side of the most elevated ridge, the Morana. We did not think it very promising; and, finding no clear space about, we parted with our friends, who seemed disposed to remain there, and

continued to a place called Bali, about a couple of miles further on. We found a clear green spot above the bank of a river, that flowed from the Morana mountains past this village; and, tempted by a half-finished house where we could repose till our baggage arrived, resolved to remain on it. The rain was over, and the sun shining brightly. We stripped ourselves of our wet clothes; and, hanging them up to dry on the branches about, made ourselves as comfortable as nakedness and hunger could allow. The little strip of land on which we are, lies on each side of a river, flowing through a deep glen considerably below its level. It is well cultivated, and there are many habitations within it; but it has nothing sufficiently wonderful to tempt me to say any thing further about it.

June 30th.—We started this morning again in the rain; and, descending to the river, followed its course through the dark glen, in which it runs with great rapidity. It seemed as if it were necessary to trust ourselves to be washed out of the dismal strait we were in, by placing ourselves in the middle of the stream: its current was the only

indication we had, that there was a mode of escape; there was no path on either side, and the water was up to the waist: I cannot therefore praise this day's journey.

The glen at length narrowed so much, that we anticipated a subterranèous passage into day, if we were doomed to see the sky once more. We turned round a rugged rock, .beneath which the river grew darker and deeper, and suddenly broke upon a wide plain, or rather an extensive marsh. Rain still continued, and it was covered with a thick vapour. We had, like Satan, though with a different spirit, I hope,

> In with the river sunk, and with it rose,
> Involved in rising mist; then sought
> Where to lie hid.

The river flowed over the marsh, and very high mountains bounded it: there was no appearance of habitation, although it was richly cultivated with rice. A small temple stood in the centre, beneath a very indifferent Deo Dhar; for in the lowest parts they do not grow to any size or beauty. It was dedicated to the goddess Bo-

wanee, and gave a name to the surrounding peaks, called from her *Bowanee Ka Teeba.* So little wood was there within reach, that we found it difficult to obtain sufficient to kindle a fire for our breakfasts: we at length spied a boy tending cattle on the hill, and called out to him to get us milk and wood. He placed himself upon a high peak, and called aloud, "Two gentlemen have arrived: bring them milk and wood directly, and all they may require besides."

We remembered the feast in the valley of Nanguan, and looked with wonder upon the naked magician, who, we hoped, was to spread a banquet on the green before us. In less than an hour, our hopes were fulfilled; a train of villagers appeared with every thing that we desired.

In most mountains sound travels very far and fast, but these seemed to be most particularly calculated for such communication. In irregular avenues of peaked hills, the voice bounded, as it were, from one to another, increasing as it went. The men have an intonation that none but mountaineers can catch; and, dwelling on the last accent in a wild, and not unfrequently sweet

manner, prolong the sound till they are nearly exhausted, and then abandon it to the echo, which never fails to second them most admirably. I was curious to know what idea the hill-men had formed (if they had thought of the matter at all) of the reverberation of sound, and questioned the villagers who brought our supplies, straining my throat in the experiment, of what it was that mocked my words. It was long before I could succeed in making them understand my object: they had no term to express it by, and were perfectly unacquainted with the Hindostanee word for *echo*. They were afraid, for some moments, to hazard an opinion; till one, more bold than the rest, stepped forth, and declared it must be a wild beast in the mountain, that was startled by our voices, and bellowed in return. "*Acha*," (good,) with a murmur of approval, ran through the party: this was a personification of the echo, that might match the celebrated conversational one of Killarney.

The plain on which we were assembled, did not continue long deserted: about mid-day the men and women came to the rice grounds, with their

music and their song; and we found ourselves more celebrated and more deafened than ever. Of all uncomfortable occupations on this earth, the culture of rice appears to me the worst. The women were all the day long up to their knees in mud, and their persons were sprinkled with it most bountifully.

The little temple to Bowanee is the most desolate of all we have met with: not a Brahmin, not a village within sight of it. The pious sages of former days had, in these holy precincts, abundant leisure and quiet for the profoundest contemplation. Now, no offering seems to be made at it, no incense burnt upon its altar, and no prayer breathed within it: it stands in the wilderness, a proof of the sanctity of former times, and a reproach perhaps for the indifference of the present. As the world has grown older, its allurements, I suppose, have become less fascinating; for few people think it necessary to banish themselves now to gain the reputation of piety. The march of intellect, however, may have fortified their minds against temptation: or has the advance of luxury overthrown the virtue of self-denial? Whatever

may be the cause of such change, India is not the only country, where deserted temples stand to speak of what was, and what is not.

The forlorn appearance of a single tree in the desert increases the feeling of solitude; and the neglected ruin of Bowanee heightened the desolation of the scene, when we first emerged from the bed of the river, and found ourselves in the midst of a dismal swamp; for such a rice-ground, in its present stage, must ever seem to be. We were glad when the merry cultivators came to enliven the scene.

July 1st.—Continuing our route by the bank of the river, we reached a spot opposite the village of Tuttura, and had scarcely room to pitch our tents for the quantity of rice in every direction. We were forced to ascend the hill to some height, before we could get a dry space. The stream flowed between us and the village; it was full of trout, which my servants caught with a napkin tied like a landing-net to the end of a stick.

There was little inducement to continue in this neighbourhood; and, as we could not ascend to the summits of the hills with any chance of completing

our journey, we determined to proceed to Lugrassa on the top of a high ridge, about three miles further from us: but my guide, who was evidently afraid to go to it, besought us not to stop there on any account, for the cholera morbus had been committing sad ravages among its inhabitants, and no stranger had gone through it for ten days.

Finding that Landour was only five hours' walk from this place, I agreed, to the delight of all, (for the report of the "city of the plague" being so near at hand had spread a panic among my followers) to remain at Tuttura. There were no means of roaming about its neighbourhood, from the universal deluge that overwhelmed it; and we were glad when the morning gave us an opportunity of quitting it.

July 2nd.—By way of getting in good time to Landour, (for we had at length reached the last day's journey,) we started from Tuttura before daylight; and, splashing for the first hour through rice fields up to our knees in water, we gained the height on which the ill-fated Lugrassa stands. The sun had just risen, and we caught a view of the new settlement shining in its rays. The bun-

galows on the peaks of Landour, peeping through the trees that surrounded them several hundred feet above us, afforded a prospect of civilization that was highly delightful to us, after an absence of two months from such a scene. For the last ten days we have had rain every day; and have no reason, in consequence, to lament our having at length reached more substantial habitations than our tents have been able to afford. We have frequently been compelled to pass the night sitting upon our bedding, which we had rolled up in a corner of the tent to prevent its getting wet from the heavy rain which dropped, filtered, to be sure, through the canvass upon it.

The entertaining variety of our roof being carried like a balloon into the air, while we were sleeping beneath it, had occurred too often to render it any longer amusing. The confusion such a catastrophe gives rise to, is too ludicrous to be viewed with much feeling of annoyance; although the few minutes that are necessary to struggle through the soaked canvass that promises to overwhelm you in your bed, are any thing but comfortable—there is so much that is amusing in

the adventure after you have escaped, that the traveller, who would lament meeting with it, must have very little taste for his occupation. Such scenes are merely rough enough to prove how vile a life of luxury and ease is, compared to such enjoyment of strength and hardihood.

The day was some time advanced, when we arrived near the village of Lugrassa; and I thought there was an appearance of desolation about it. I saw no people within the village, and observed merely a few stragglers about the fields. Four or five men had died during the last week, and some before: such mortality would depopulate a mountain city in a month. Nothing can be more melancholy than a pestilence among these fragments of humanity: cut off from their fellow mountaineers by high ridges, these isolated little communities are left to perish unknown and unmourned.

I have learned from some natives, who have lately been at Badri Nath, that that neighbourhood also has been ravaged by the cholera morbus. They cannot check the disease: it seizes them in all situations—in their houses—in the

fields; and in a very few hours they are its victims. As the most hardy fall first, the infants, deprived of their protectors, should they escape the infection, must die of starvation. The cattle are abandoned, the crops neglected, and every traveller shuns the "city of the plague:" and even that precaution is no security. Pilgrims die in agony on the road: to enter one of these little vales is indeed to enter "the valley of the shadow of death."—The inhabitants resign themselves to their destiny: the same fate would await them in a neighbouring village, perhaps, should they seek refuge there. They cling to their homes to the last gasp; and the survivor of a once happy people, where all were gay but a few days before, has to steal to his grave unnoticed, or roam elsewhere for human intercourse. Could the vision of "the Last Man" be ever realized, it would be in the highest habitations of the Himalaya mountains; for there many a little world is left for its last man to mourn over!

From the ridge where Lugrassa stands, we descended to a stream, on the banks of which were many fine walnut-trees—the fruit was in great

abundance, and fit to pluck: we had, from the base of the mountain at which it flowed, to make a most severe ascent to Landour, and in about three hours reached its summit. During the two months we had been absent from it, all the difficulties attending the establishment of a new colony had been skilfully overcome: the roads were finished, the houses were inhabited, and the invalids had recovered, where recovery was reasonably looked for. Many additional visiters had arrived, and many bungalows were completed that had scarcely been thought of.

When we set out upon our expedition, the crest of the mountain, for nearly two miles, presented a populous and lively scene. The region, that not long ago was an unfrequented wilderness, is now charmed by society, and graced by refinement: wild jungles, and rugged rocks, have given way to flourishing gardens and comfortable buildings. So sudden has been the change, that Aladdin seems to have brought his wonderful lamp to effect it.

During the early part of the month of July it did not rain very much; the weather was pleasant

and cool, the thermometer seldom varying from 70°. About the 20th, the rain became more frequent, and fell more heavily; and on the 30th, commenced in good earnest.

August 3rd.—A very violent storm of thunder and lightning came on yesterday about eight in the evening, while I was sitting in the verandah of a house on the commencement of the *Missoura Ka Teeba* range. The noise of the thunder, as it pealed among the hills, was tremendous; and the rain that accompanied it fell in such torrents, that it threatened to overwhelm our bungalow and wash it down the rocky steep, on the edge of which it stood. The lightning was even more terrific—but so grand, that it was impossible to draw our eyes from the observation of its flashes of flame, as they shot through the woods and into the precipices. It is difficult to conceive a spectacle more sublime, or a tumult more appalling. From the closeness of the thunder-claps and the incessant return of the forked fire, we were convinced that we were in the midst of this fury, and frequently thought that we could hear the falling of the wood before the blasting stroke. It was a proper night

for evil spirits to be abroad in. Not a being of our party could dare its violence: all the servants, whose structures were so much more flimsy than our own, had crept into the bungalow, and crouched beneath its verandahs wet and miserable. It seemed the only ark likely to float above the waters that threatened to deluge us, and for a time we thought that it also must bow to the storm. It stood upon the crest of a rock, overlooking a deep valley, the descent to which was thickly wooded: behind was a similar abyss; and on the left hand a still more abrupt descent: on the right was a dark forest of oaks and rhododendron. Thus we stood in the midst of peril; and when loose masses of stone rolled down the steeps within sound, we were disposed for a moment to think that we also might join in the fall. The rain increased the rapidity of the few streams beneath us, and made them rumble away with tenfold noise. I do not think a lover of romance could have been placed in a more delightful situation for his excited fancy:

> That night a child might understand
> The De'il had business in hand.

We survived the storm, however; and in the morning found that our imagination regarding the fall of the riven trees was correct enough: several were scattered about and displayed the lightning stroke. But the most material fall was that of our goat-shed, which had been completely demolished; and six goats and ten sheep lying dead beneath it, proved with what violence most of them had been killed by the fluid.

On our approaching the spot, we were attended by a host of hill-men, who watched our proceedings with great anxiety; and when we desired that the carcases of the animals should be thrown away, hastily interceded to save them for themselves, to have a feast upon. We very willingly granted the favour; for in truth we could not envy them their food. Their swollen bodies did not deter them, on nearer approach, from attempting the meal, and they bore them off in triumph on their backs: they had been well fattened for our table, and perhaps the lightning stroke had sanctified them for theirs. Neither the goats nor the sheep of the plains have thriven very well during the wet weather in the hills: they all suffer from

what is called, I believe, the foot-rot; and no means that we can adopt have any effect in restoring them.

The sheep are now blind too, without any apparent cause—and consequently become useless; for they cannot be trusted to graze. The natives attempt to cure this last malady by chewing certain herbs, among which tobacco and some hot spices are mixed, and spitting the juice into the poor animals' eyes: it gives them great pain at the time of the operation, and seems to me rather calculated to extinguish any light that may yet remain, than restore that which they have lost. The poultry too are lost constantly from the same cause; but their fate is more sudden. While running in perfect health, they appear to be struck blind; and, staggering for an instant, fall dead. As it is an affair of some difficulty to keep a plentiful board, we cannot avoid being deeply interested in the state of our stock.

A great portion of this morning was passed in endeavouring to shoot some of the magnificent eagles, that soared in great number over the high peaks above us, and the deep precipices below.

I have seen sometimes ten or twelve at a time, performing their airy evolutions in most beautiful style. At length, one fell, but it was not one of the largest: it measured nine feet from tip to tip of its wings, and seemed to me to resemble very strongly the golden eagle of the Highlands of Scotland, some of which have been killed measuring eleven feet across their wings.

It is not a very easy matter to find amusement in so confined a spot as we are limited to; for if we make long excursions, we cannot, from the severe labour, return in the same day; we must therefore look nearer home. If we had a bridge to lounge upon, we should probably find the diversion of a recruiting-officer a very agreeable one; we have, however, invented a more manly exercise, and meet in groups on the greatest heights, to cast large stones down the precipices. As we take the field well armed with crow-bars, pick-axes, &c., we are fully prepared to launch tremendous weights; and, childish as it may appear, it is impossible to describe the rapture with which we hail the departure of our plaything, and watch its course as it bounds along, with a noise like

thunder, carrying trees with it, or, if they be large enough to withstand its force, breaking into a hundred pieces, and leaping and rolling away in increasing fragments to the bottom.

I learned a curious instance this morning of trying the truth, by a test of bodily fortitude, which is not uncommon among some classes in the East. It arose from a charge that one hill-woman had brought against another. They were both wives of pioneer soldiers from the province of Sirmoor; and one accused her companion to the officer who commanded them, of having stolen several of her rings from her—the accused as stoutly denied it; and there was no circumstance on either side to direct the judgment. The charged thief, however, boldly declared that the other told a lie, and dared her to the ordeal. The challenge was readily accepted, and they were to hold their hands together in a vessel of boiling hot *ghie*, and whichever shrunk first was to be proclaimed foul and calumnious. What an admirable punishment would this be for slander in our own country!

There are some minor trials (the detail of

which I do not exactly know) adopted upon these occasions: they increase in severity; if the lighter ones do not draw forth pain from the hardened sinners, they ascend to the next in gradation, till at length forced to cry out for quarter. The hot *ghie* is, I believe, the highest proof; and these women, disdaining milder ones, determined at once to stake their veracity upon it. I believe the result was still unsatisfactory, for neither flinched; nothing more, however, was heard about the matter: they found it best to settle it out of court.

Quarrels are very frequent among the natives of both sexes; but not being of revengeful dispositions, they seldom reach beyond loud and angry words. In this mode of warfare, they are invincible. They excel greatly likewise in a spirit of detraction, and are prone to injure the characters of those with whom they quarrel, by exaggeration or invention. I have often witnessed this meanness among the lower classes; and whenever it is practised towards me, I listen quietly to all that is said by the first who gains my ear, against his enemy: taking an opportunity soon afterwards to converse with the abused one, I give him

encouragement to paint the character of the other, and he generally reaches that drawn of himself. When I think the balance of lies is equal, I confront the enemies; and, relating what each said of the other, read them a lecture on their falsehoods, and recommend them not to give me the option of believing such tales against them.

To change from one evil passion to another,—I was astonished the other day by a very handsome pioneer sepoy, who approached his officer in the most soldier-like style, and, touching his cap, begged permission to cut his wife's nose off. His respectful manner, joined to the singular request, made it almost impossible to attend to him gravely, however serious the application seemed to be. He did not appear to me to be very anxious to perform the operation; it was a sacrifice, I conceive, to his honour. His wife had been faithless with a man of low caste, a Chumar, as he scornfully confessed; for this gave him a deeper pang than the fact of the dame's frailty—and he could not suffer her to carry the charms that caused his dishonour, uninjured, to draw him into fresh calamity.

A man, who asks his friend's advice about com-

mitting suicide, is not very likely to perform the act: in the same manner, the jealous husband adopted the wisest plan of getting out of his dilemma. He bore the disappointment of a refusal with great firmness—although it was sad, he said, after having been married to him since she was twelve years of age, that she should now forsake him for a base Chumar. "Oh, what a falling-off was there!"

We accompanied him to his tent to endeavour to reconcile the parties, and save the nose of the offending wife. She was an extremely pretty woman, and seemed to be dismayed at our approach: she had been weeping, and was now sitting in a disconsolate position, in a corner of the room: she had no children, but an elderly woman stood near her, who, from her concern, we conjectured was her mother. Alas! she had good cause to be concerned; for she had been the source of all the mischief. The true Mercury of the East, she had borne the tender messages from the base-born swain. The moment this little *dénouement* took place, the vengeance of the husband was transferred from his wife to her con-

fidant; and had we not been by, I do not think he would have satisfied himself with her nose only: she would scarcely have escaped with her head. Encouraged by our presence, she wagged her tongue most skilfully against him, while the poor wife seemed really to shed tears of bitter sorrow. We were at length able to reconcile the parties. The wife promised all the deepest repentance could promise, and the husband received her contrition, and restored her to his heart, from which indeed she could scarcely have been banished; for the delight with which he seized upon the old woman's conduct to exculpate his wife, proved how ready he was to forgive and trust again. We promised, however, that the presumptuous Sudra and his wicked messenger should be both banished from the mountains; and the officer succeeded in obtaining their dismissal that very day.

I met them on their descent, an evil and a well-matched pair. The Lothario of the hills, whose gallantry had driven him from his high abode, was "a fellow with a horrid face," and a little crooked figure; while the old woman was yellow and

wrinkled to a degree. I should have been happy to have contrived a match between them: it would have been a good and fitting punishment for the crimes that are now sending them, "with wandering steps and slow," to encounter the rains that are deluging the plains.

Such instances of severity among the Hindoos are not, I think, common. The punishment the soldier proposed would certainly have the effect of preventing a continuance of the crime, if beauty led to it; although, from what I have read and heard of the women, there would be no noses among them, if all met with their reward. I do not know how these judgments have been formed; but I am inclined to come to a very opposite one, and think those who have accused the female peasantry of the country of general immorality have been rather hasty. I am disposed to be their champion for more beauty, cleanliness, and good conduct, than, under their great disadvantages, the most liberal could expect. Their exclusive mode of living among their own caste must prevent a similar falling-off to the one that has given rise to these reflections.

It is impossible to view some members of the despised class without sorrow and pity, particularly those who are attached, in the lowest offices, to the establishments of the Europeans. They are the most melancholy race of beings, always alone, and apparently unhappy: they are scouted from the presence even of their fellow-servants. None but the mind of a poet could imagine such outcasts venturing to raise their thoughts to the beauty of a Brahmin's daughter; and a touching tale in such creative fancy, no doubt, it would make, for, from their outward appearances, I do not perceive why they should not be endowed with minds as sensitive at least as those of the castes above them. There are among them some very stout and handsome men; and it is ridiculous to see sometimes all their strength devoted to the charge of a sickly puppy;—to take care of dogs being their principal occupation!

A great argument in favour of the fidelity of the women is their voluntary sacrifice on the funeral pile of their lords. It is not very likely that the wife, who would deem it disgraceful to survive her husband, would offend against him while living.

A very appalling story of the madness of jealousy is related of an officer who was brought up in the Mahratta service, and in mature age came over to ours. He had three wives, and conceived suspicions against them all. Without explaining his motives, he desired them to meet him in his room one morning, attired in their richest apparel and most costly jewels. On entering, he is supposed to have commanded them to sink on their knees, and confess their wickedness. "Alas! what ignorant sin have we committed?" like unhappy Desdemona, was all that they could utter. Their furious Othello was as determined, and, without listening to their appeals to his mercy and his love, drew his sabre, and severed their heads from their bodies. The report of a pistol drew some of his attendants to the room; and, on breaking it open, they found the murderer and his miserable victims dead and bathed in blood! I never heard that any grounds were discovered for his horrible revenge; nor indeed could any of the "trifles light as air," which grow so alarmingly in the jealous mind, be traced. I question whether the annals of any Turkish

harem could afford a more terrible picture. In Turkey the husband slaughters from cruelty only, however; he is not likely to sacrifice himself. Some honour may be allowed (a miserable one) to have moved this Indian murderer—as he did add himself to the number of the slain.

The easy mode in which marriages are managed in the hills, makes the chances of jealousy very light indeed. The women, as I have before observed, have all the advantage on their side—a plurality of husbands; for when so many men are satisfied to share in their affections, it is not very likely that their lives will be disturbed by "the green-eyed monster."

In some districts, or among some tribes in the hills, the women are privileged to divorce their husbands as often as they please: so a capricious dame may enjoy the mortification of all the men of her village, if it could be possible to mortify such cold-hearted gentlemen. I never met but one husband who had really suffered under this custom. The man, who begged something to buy a petticoat for his wife, however, entertained serious apprehensions of such a fate, if we did not relieve

him. The villager, who accompanied us as guide from Nongong to Burkotee, complained of his cruel fate, in having been married to, and divorced from, three or four wives: "And yet," he said, "I am young, have a good house, and possess more land than any other in the village." He had evidently volunteered to accompany us, for the purpose of telling his sad tale. He was a good-looking youth, seemed to be about twenty, and, after expatiating at some length on the perverseness of his fate, he besought my advice to teach him how to woo: I was too little acquainted with the feelings of the mountain maids to be a valuable confidant; but gave him all the consolation I could think of. When I told him, however, that my own experience would not assist him much, (for I had yet won no wife for myself,) he looked confounded, and, shaking his head, seemed to say—"Alas! where shall I seek for comfort now?" I was very much entertained at the prospect of becoming a travelling match-maker, and wished that I could have returned to my friend's village to make the first experiment in his behalf. From the moment I told him that I was without a

wife myself, he attached himself more closely to my side, sympathising with my sorrows; for I have no doubt he conjectured that the same untoward star that had thwarted his pursuit of domestic happiness, had likewise interrupted mine.

From the last day of July until the end of August, there has not been a dry hour; the clouds hang so heavily on the peaks of the mountains on which we live, that we are completely enveloped in mist. The valley of the Dhoon is generally concealed from our view all the day long; but towards sun-set the vapour that overhangs it clears away a little, and we see it as a beautiful picture partially discovered through a thin veil. During this month the thermometer has ranged from 60° to 62° throughout the twenty-four hours: so even a climate is rarely met with in any part of the world.

Although every thing is extremely damp, and we cannot obtain a glance of the sun, I do not find that people complain of colds or rheumatism, or any of the accompaniments of a moist atmosphere. On the contrary, every person boasts of his health, and praises the climate. In the morn-

ing, sometimes, we have a clear view of the snowy range to the north-east: the early riser may be rewarded by beholding the most beautiful sun-rise that the imagination can conceive—a chain of snow, reaching nearly from Cabul to Thibet, changing into all the colours that the growing day can paint! It would be difficult to match this scene in any other situation upon earth.

Towards the middle of September, the rain began to abate its force; a little still falling, however, in some quantity every day, and the temperature continuing still at 62°. The wet appears to be confined to the range bounding the valley on which we are. For three days' journey inwards from this, there has been no fall for some time; and in the plains, the rainy season seems to have already broken up.

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CHAPTER VII.

Descent from Landour—The rainy season—Police station—The Khere Pass—Sounds of revelry—Melancholy memorials—Peacocks—Village of Khere—Violent hurricane—Excursion through water—Rise of the Callinuddy—Goats rescued—Agreeable discovery—Holy water—Active preparations—Passage of the river—Night encampment—Deobund described—Fare of the Hindoos—Food of the Bengalese—A Turkish dinner—Begum Somroo's troops—A stratagem—The disgraced General—Female tyrant—Baggage-bearers—Roads in Upper India—Kutowlee—Saees, or Running Footmen—Females at the well—Eastern custom—Meerut, a military station—Scarcity of women—Magnificent festival—Amusements at Meerut—Colonel Skinner's horse—Travelling in a palanquin—Eastern hyperbole—Ghaut of Ghurmoktesir—Interior of a boat—Singular navigation—Ferruckabad—Curious clock—Indigo factories—River scenery—Mahometan ceremonies—Cooking and eating—The lost keys—Crocodiles—Ghaut of Cawnpore—A budgerow—Boats at Cawnpore—Moored vessels—General clamour—Attractions of a bazaar—Appearance of native towns—Soldiers' wives, &c.—Hospital transport—Amazonian fleet.

SEPT. 22nd.—At length the day arrived for quitting these delightful regions, and descending to the sultry plains once more. It had ceased to rain for

some time on the hills, and we imagined that it might have given over in the low country also. We descended about four o'clock to Rajpoor, and reached it in an hour and a quarter. The road is so steep, that it is necessary to keep at a run the whole time; and we had been so long in training, that we were able to effect it admirably: the distance is computed at eight miles.

Since the month of April we had not moved a hundred yards on level ground. I did not find in consequence that I was unfitted for a walk on the plains. I have read somewhere of a native of the Tyrol, accustomed all his life to precipices and "hills perpendicular," being so nervous when on flat ground, that he was detected by a friend in Grosvenor Square, creeping close to the area-railings that he might save himself in case of falling. I cannot pretend to any feeling of this description; but I can well conceive how "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable" the plains must appear to a native of the magnificent mountains we are now leaving, almost as much wedded to their charms as the most enthusiastic of their inhabitants could be.

At the foot of the hills we found our horses and

camels; and, trying to forget the freedom of the upper world, commenced our journey this morning to Dehra at daylight, in order that we might be under cover before the sun rose. We had no sooner reached the tope of trees we had pitched upon for our resting-ground than the most heavy rain commenced, accompanied by thunder and lightning. Our tents were not able to keep it out; and we apprehended every moment being unroofed. We now discovered how premature we had been in our descent; but it was too late to retrieve the error, and we were obliged to continue. I have before noticed how melancholy a thing a rainy day is under canvass, particularly such flimsy affairs as we are reduced to, for we have not been able to replace our mountain tents, and the water trickles through them in every direction.

Our abodes resemble good-sized shower-baths; and we are forced to sit the best part of the day with umbrellas over our heads. Wise people never venture into tents until the rainy season is completely at an end; for, independently of the want of comfort during the actual fall, all around is a dismal swamp, and the smell from the rank

vegetation is enough to poison the most indifferent to bad odours. Besides, the humours that the sun draws from the earth carry plague and pestilence in every breath. In the Dhoon, where there is so much unreclaimed jungle, it is not easy to spend a rainy day at this season of the year, without perceiving the danger of it.

We determined, therefore, to push on, and, in stead of remaining the night at Dehra, halt at the entrance to the Khere Pass, (the opposite one to that which we had entered by): we arrived, about nightfall, at a clear spot by the side of a small stream, the name of which I did not learn, and had our tents pitched upon it. It was very wild around. On a rising ground behind us, prettily embosomed in trees, were a few native huts: there was no regular road to them but down the face of the hill on which they stood, which seemed to have been made, not by hands, but by the feet of those who come daily for water to the stream below. It was the first police station on the inner side of the valley; and an important-looking personage, with a broad scarlet belt over his shoulders, and a large brass breast-plate upon it,

on which was engraved his office, superintended the department.

Rough crags overhung the little river, in which our servants caught a few fish; and all seemed to indicate the pass by which a sortie from the Dhoon was to be made: so narrow was the mouth, that it might have been closed with gates of iron, like the Happy Valley of Rasselas. If, with all the blandishments that were lavished upon him, however, he wished to escape from it, it is no wonder that in the present state of our valley, we were very loth to continue longer among its beauties; for with beauties it most undoubtedly abounds. The nearest resemblance I can find to its general appearance in the East, is in some of the wildest scenes in the interior of Ceylon. Its rough crags, rapid streams, wooded hills, and long grass, all remind me of that island; and there are in that isle some of the loveliest scenes in nature: but, alas! there is no sweet in life without a large portion of bitter. The most beautiful spots are also the most unhealthy. I think, where the vegetable world is most luxuriant, the human race is invariably the reverse.

At daylight we commenced our departure from

the Dhoon, and found the Khere Pass little more open than if it had been a cavern that passed under a rock. We were riding over a stony bed with the water up to our horses' knees; high hills hung over us on each side, their summits well wooded, and their rocky sides occasionally relieved by flowering plants. Sometimes the way was very narrow and dark, while the water rushed rapidly over it; at others it widened considerably, and gave us the appearance of passing a lake with islets of stone in the midst of it. A few cataracts fell from the sides; and it was altogether most romantic and beautiful. When winding through the narrowest part of it, we were surprised by the most uncouth sounds of sylvan revelry, as we imagined, which echoed along the hills. Had it not been daylight, we might have taken them for the cries of Comus and his crew; for with such noises,

"night by night,
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl—"

and,

"Within the bosom of this hideous wood—"

he might have found a fitting cover for his evil doings.

On emerging from our winding dell, however,

how were our fairy fancies put to flight, when we perceived a string of three palanquins, from the grunting bearers of which proceeded all the "tumultuous mirth," that had come to

"Invade the silence of these lonely shades."

There were about forty half-naked figures, some under the poles of the palkees, while the others were scattered wildly about, splashing through the water, and howling with the perseverance of jackalls. As it was very soon after daylight, some of their torches were still alight, and added to the singularity, and almost barbarity of the scene.

We found acquaintances in the palanquins—an officer of the civil service, and his family, on their way to Landour. There was no time for long parley, and we soon lost sight of each other. The noise of the bearers continued for some time to resound among the hills, and we were loth to believe that we were not still travelling upon enchanted ground.

On leaving the passage of the hills, we found the water diminish, but the road continued as stony as ever. The sun was now up, and we

halted to breakfast, and spend the heat of the day more in the jungle than we had even done the night before. We were without the hills that close in the Dhoon, but in the midst of the Saul forest, through which I had hunted some time before. We could not move fifty yards from our little tent without losing ourselves in the midst of swampy ground and long grass, with the probability of furnishing a repast to some tiger; for this spot had all the appearance of being thickly inhabited by them; and close to us was a melancholy memorial of the death of some traveller or huntsman by one—a loose heap of stones, with a long bamboo rising from the centre of it, with a small white pennant floating at its taper point. Such remembrancers of mortality are sufficiently startling in the midst of the Forest; and the solitary traveller, as night draws round him, suddenly coming upon one, is not likely to have his meditations improved as he pursues his weary way.

We found, towards the afternoon, that our servants and beasts of burden were so tired, that we must pass the night at this place, where we had only meditated remaining during the heat of the

sun. The day had gone, and the night soon passes in this country; so we did not repine much at the calamity. Our people were alarmed at the prospect of being disturbed by tigers, and made every preparation for keeping large fires, which blazed away during the whole night. The cry of the jackall and the scream of the hyena were all the disturbance we met with.

Again at daylight we mounted our horses, and followed a narrow track through the jungle for above two hours: under foot it was soft sand, and we got on famously. Upon emerging from the woods, we passed over a plain, in which several hundred peacocks at least were feeding. It is impossible to conceive a more beautiful scene: they were all in fine feather, and many were strutting about with the greatest vanity. Our appearance soon spoiled their amusement, and drove them scampering in every direction. None of them, I observed, took to the wing; but they all ran so fast, that we soon lost sight of them.

We had now completely reached the plains, and found our tents pitched close to the village of Khere, upon a bare field, with not a tree to shield

them from the hottest sun I ever felt. It was impossible to continue all day here; and observing a large peeput-tree at a great distance, we instantly emigrated towards it, and sat beneath the shadow of its branches while our equipage was moving. It was near this village that we had encamped when on our tiger excursion in the Spring; and, nothing daunted by the *contretemps* of the Puneeala's ee's, i's, and o's, we resolved upon trying the same route again: about eight o'clock at night, while the moon was shining brightly, we despatched two camels towards that place, meaning to set out for it ourselves the next morning at daylight.

The night was the most clear and lovely I ever remember to have seen; but, as if doomed to witness a storm in this neighbourhood, about two in the morning the most violent hurricane arose and nearly laid us flat: fortunately, however, the shelter of the tree preserved us. The rain drove into our tents in every direction and with the utmost fury: our baggage and the poor servants' clothes were flying before the wind; and our hitherto peaceable little party was scattered, like

doves before the eagle. I was obliged to rise from my bed, and fold up my bedding, as I had before done; then sit upon it, and hold an umbrella over me. The storm lasted for more than an hour: it was impossible to rest after it, and we were up and ready to start before daylight; doubtful of the road, however, we thought it prudent to remain until we could see perfectly.

At first, we found the path tolerably good over the fields, among which we had encamped: coming suddenly, however, into long grass, we did not perceive the quantity of water on the ground, till we had got so deeply involved in it, we found it impossible to proceed with safety, and difficult to retire. We urged our horses on; the water soon reached their girths, and we became almost lost in a wide sea. There were no landmarks, we may really say, to guide us. We waded up and down, and knew not which way to stir: there were many copses that held their heads higher than anything in the neighbourhood; and to these we rode, or almost swam, in hopes that we might find dry ground to rest

on, in order to recover our strength, and collect our thoughts, but always without effect.

The sun was now growing very hot, and still we were in the midst of a waste of waters. We began to feel serious apprehensions: we had so completely lost the path, that to return was as impossible as to proceed; we determined, therefore, upon coming to a halt, and exercising our lungs for a rescue. We had halloo'd, I am sure, for half an hour, when we heard a sound so faint, it resembled a distant echo of our own voices. We repeated our shouts, however, and at length were answered more distinctly: still we could see nothing; yet our friend, or the spirit of the waters, shrieked, we were not very clear which. Screaming with all our might, however, we moved in the direction of the voice; praying that there might be no vocal Will-o'-the-wisp to plague us. We had the good fortune, as we approached, to find the responsive shout grow louder and louder; and at length perceived a faquir with a long pole in his hand, up to his waist in water. He told us that he was on the right path, and that we should never have reached our destination,

if we had not fallen in with him. We were willing to believe this, for we found that we had wandered nearly half an hour from the proper road, and were likely to continue in error all the day, if we had not fallen in with this devout personage, whose return from pilgrimage proved a matter of great importance to us. He had been to Kedar Nath and Gungoutri, and we looked upon him as a fellow-wanderer.

We moved slowly behind him; and, with the assistance of his long pole, and his great knowledge of the country, he was enabled to keep us on the right path. We were more than an hour before we got completely out of the watery desert: we then entered upon a tract of land where the water had been, and over which we found it still more difficult to move. It was a perfect marsh, in which we sunk to the horses' knees every step: in attempting to lead them we found matters even worse; for then both ourselves and horses stuck in the mud.

I made a resolution, that this should be positively the last time of my visiting Puneeala: this place was evidently not intended for me. When

we escaped from the marsh, and reached the banks of the Callinuddy, a small stream over which we expected easily to ford, we were dismayed by seeing our camels lying down on the near bank. They had been nearly drowned, the drivers assured me, during the night, and had reached that spot at daylight, and found the river so swollen by the rain, that it was impossible to pass over.

It was nearly eleven o'clock; so we had been from daylight travelling five miles. The stream was still so deep, and so rapid, that I saw but little prospect of getting through it. My goat-herd had, some time before my arrival, carried the goats to some distance above the stream, growing tired I suppose of waiting on this bank, while there was a tempting village on the opposite side. In a few minutes the poor animals came down the river at a tremendous rate, bleating most miserably. Their inconsiderate shepherd, fancying that a wind in the river, which caused the waters to bear to the opposite bank, would have swept them across, entrusted them to their fortune: they went crying down the stream, however, with very little prospect of being saved.

There was a general pursuit: my brother and myself, being the only mounted ones of the party, galloped our unhappy horses, almost dead with fatigue, along the banks; while all the footmen we could muster, flying with their utmost speed, nearly kept up with us. They were armed with long sticks, which the natives generally carry when travelling, and shouted loudly to encourage the poor goats to draw to the bank. It was a most animated scene, and might have passed for an otter hunt, or salmon-spearing party.

We had gone fully a mile before we could head the goats: and then, rushing into the water, we endeavoured to stay them in their course. It was of no avail; they were forced by the current out of the people's hands, who were nearly swept away with them. We fortunately perceived a bed of rushes a little below us, reaching some way into the stream, through which they would certainly be driven: we hastened on; and, posting ourselves among them, stood ready to seize the exhausted creatures. When they arrived, a sort of fight ensued, in which we proved victorious, and our half-drowned goats were safely landed.

It had become now so hot, that we resolved to make the experiment of passing the Callinuddy. The side on which we were, had not a single tree of any description; and where the water was not, all was white sand. The opposite village was bare enough, too; but behind it I knew there were many magnificent trees. The river reaches close to the wall of the village, (for it had a small one on the water-side,) and there was a landing-place a little without it.

From the place we chose to start from (which was considerably above the stream,) to this ghaut, was about three hundred yards: we found it was necessary to swim our horses across; and so great a struggle had we to gain the proposed point, that I began to despair of ever getting the camels over. About the middle of the stream was a capsized bullock hackery, which had been laden with soda-water for the refreshment of some gentleman in the Dhoon. We discovered a few stone bottles, that had been saved from it, and were too thirsty to stand upon ceremony with it. It was a most timely discovery; and the popping of the corks served as an amusement to the

villagers, who had by this time assembled in great numbers about us. It was the first time perhaps they had ever seen "*bhillathe panee,*" or English water, as I may venture to call it; for that word is generally applied to every thing that comes from our country.

A native servant once asked me gravely, if all the wells in England bubbled and sparkled in the same manner. The Hindoos, who, in all parts of the world, think their holy Ganges the purest and pleasantest, should have a higher opinion of us for carrying the water of our own springs about with us: the Mahometans too have their zemzem. The head men of the village assured us, that before very long the river would go down sufficiently to allow our baggage to cross, and that he should find plenty of people to assist in its passage. We determined, therefore, to wait quietly in the most sheltered spot we could find, till it was cool enough to superintend the ferry. He led us to the banks of a small lake, above which stood a very pretty pagoda, with a flight of steps from its porch to the water, which seemed to be the common bath of the whole village: be-

hind it was a thick grove of mango-trees, through which the sun had never penetrated. All was so still and unfrequented during the heat of the day, that Diana and her nymphs might have selected this spot for their diversions; and we were so tired, that we could scarcely have moved from our shady retreat to have interrupted them by our curiosity.

A little before three o'clock, our servants began to creep in, and announced that the whole of the camels had arrived on the opposite bank of the river, which had fallen so much, that there was every chance of their crossing it before six o'clock. We were not sorry to receive this addition to our party, and commenced active preparations for breakfast, which we had not yet been able to effect. Between four and five, we made our appearance on the banks of the river; and, although it was still very rapid, I thought it had subsided sufficiently to enable all to get across. Camels are most helpless in deep water, and it is not uncommon for them to turn completely over on their sides—a feat, they had performed two or three times in the course of their journey from Khere in the morning. All my things were wet; and a

number of stuffed birds, the Monal and horned pheasant of the mountains, were so spoiled, I was obliged to throw them away.

The passage of the river presented an active scene. We had enlisted all the people of the village into the operations, making them carry over the lighter things upon their heads; while three or four men were attached to the sides of each camel, as guides and protectors. After a great deal of preliminary screaming and scolding, we got our little army fairly launched, with the first division of baggage: in a little more than an hour, we managed to get the whole of it over, without any loss or accident.

We are about five miles from where we passed last night, and we have been just two-and-twenty hours in making the journey. Our tents were pitched among the mango-trees beside the lake, and the quiet retreat for the Goddess of the Chase was soon converted into a scene of bustle and uproar; fires blazed in every direction, and cakes and curry were being moulded quickly into shape. The head man of the village, who had paid us devoted attention through the whole of our diffi-

culties, was resolved that we should be well watched during the night. He posted a string of Chuokedars round our encampment, and one at the door of each tent. Thieves were not likely to be favoured by the night in their researches, for the moon was beautifully bright: however, these croaking persons were, I have no doubt, of great use.

It was too hot to sleep; and as I kept the curtain of my tent up, I was amused by their figures, and the loud grunts that proceeded from them. They sat upon their hams in the same spot all night, covered with blankets that concealed their bodies, and gave them the appearance of round jars, while their heads alone seemed moveable; and, indeed, covered with large folds of cloth, they might have passed for the mouths of the jars. If they had been drawn up in a line, they would have tempted the fate of the "forty thieves," had any adventurous Morgiana been by.

Sept. 8.—Before daylight we struck our camp, and proceeded towards the now celebrated Puneeala, at least to me. It was distant twelve coss; and we proposed breakfasting midway, and send-

ing our caravan on, if we could find a tope of trees to sit in. We took great care not to wander in quest of the many villages we had before become acquainted with, nor to ring the changes upon the finite vowels in so incessant a manner as that promised to be. We traversed a long and weary plain: there were few trees, and no villages of importance enough to appear more than small mounds of earth; for the houses are generally of that colour, being built of unbaked bricks, (*cutcha,* as they are termed in Hindostanee,) and having walls of mud round them.

When we had ridden about twelve miles, we perceived, in the neighbourhood of a tolerably sized village, through the street of which we passed, a plantation of some extent: a portion of it seemed to be a garden of fruit-trees, with a smooth lawn beneath: there was a well in the midst of it, and we breakfasted and passed the heat of the day under the shelter of the branches. There were a great many fine peeput-trees in the neighbourhood, that gave food to the camels, which halted awhile to bait.

Nothing can exceed the tameness of a journey

at this season of the year through the wide plains of Upper India; and to us, who had just left the most majestic and beautiful scenery in the world, and who had passed through a region of romance almost to reach it, the effect was sad beyond description. There is nothing in one of these tremendous plains to relieve the eye, either by its verdure or its form; and the villages being, as I have before observed, of a clay colour, are more unpleasant to look upon than even the long fields.

The husbandmen in these provinces were obliged formerly to add the office of soldier to their more peaceable one, and all the villages were surrounded by high walls of mud, which generally approached in shape to a square, having a tower or bastion at each angle, with a large gate in the centre of one of its faces. Within, the streets are very narrow, and the houses low and dark: the shops have a small terrace or verandah in front, the floor of which is kept very clean; and there the merchant sits with his commodities about him. I do not think the towns are generally conspicuous for cleanliness in their streets, although I believe the

rooms (if such they may be called) are sufficiently neat and proper.

There is always enough to offend the nose, as well as the ears and the eyes. Miserable half-starved dogs are to be seen at all times trying to rake out some stinking food from the heaps of dirt that are piled up at the end of a street; and when the wind blows, the chaff and the dust are driven about at a terrible rate; and the flies are beyond all number. In such villages as the one I am now near, the inhabitants are generally agriculturists, and they do not carry on any great traffic; their shops, therefore, are very few. No place, however small, is without a proportion of every trade: there is always a smith, a carpenter, leather-dresser, barber, &c., and about the smiths' shops may be seen various loungers, gossiping and watching the sparks, as in more refined villages; for I fancy the forge has ever been the great rendezvous for village politicians.

The smiths' apparatus is very simple: they have no bellows, but use a small fan to kindle a flame; and the whole smithy might be transported from house to house in the hands of the blacksmith.

In paring the hoof of a horse, the farriers use a weapon so blunt and so awkward, that you tremble while you witness the operation. They always put the shoe on cold; but too often, instead of fitting it to the foot, rasp it down to the size of the shoe, placing a round piece of wood under it, and making the animal rest his foot upon it. They sit under his body with the foot between their legs; and surveying it leisurely, rasp away until it is reduced to the wooden model, which, like the shoe of one Chinese lady, must be able to fit the whole nation. We passed an undisturbed day among the trees we had chosen for our retreat; and in the cool of the evening rode over to Puneeala, where we dined and passed the night.

'This morning we pursued the same road that we had done before, and reached the banks of the Tank near Deobund. We rode through the town, the principal street of which was very long and narrow, with tolerably good shops on each side. The houses were high, some having latticed projections to their upper stories; and they were generally built of baked bricks. This town is also walled; but these defences being no longer ne-

cessary, are not kept in very good repair; which circumstance may be recorded as a compliment to the British government. "Now every man shall eat in safety, under his own vine, what he plants."

Not to be noticed or disturbed was all we desired during these hot days: we sought no adventure or incident therefore, and none occurred to us. Although upon the high road, we saw no travellers, and only occasionally heard the creaking noise of a bullock-carriage, to show that some beings were awake besides ourselves. The period of the hot winds may be made endurable in tents from the use of tatties; but it is impossible to mitigate the violence of autumnal heat, the season in which the rains break up. There was not a breath of air the whole day; and no rain having fallen for at least two or three nights, the ground was dry and parched, and the sand, of which the soil is composed, dazzled the eyes, and reflected the heat tenfold. There was not a bird to be seen or heard, and the very flies seemed to share in the general oppression: the restless motion and incessant hum of the musquitoes alone pre-

vented the perfect torpor we might otherwise have fallen into. All the servants and followers were happily fast asleep beneath the shadow of the surrounding trees; and the melancholy face of a camel, as its lower jaw moved slowly up and down in the act of chewing the cud, its teeth sometimes grinding, as if by accident it had missed the object of its rumination, was the only proof (a most withering one) of life being still in the midst of our little camp.

Never was the rising of the sun so prayed for during a stormy night, as its setting is by us through the glare of day; and most sudden and delightful are the effects of that moment upon us. Then every one arises, and all creatures seem to grow alive again: fires are kindled and dinners cooked, and the various casts assume their picturesque positions and interesting occupations.

The Hindoos have always been called extremely temperate, and indeed are held up as models of abstinence; but I know no race of men who enjoy their meals more, and think more about them. Their food is simple enough, but the quantity they are able to consume at one time is surprising. The deliberate manner in

which a Hindoo feeds himself shows that he considers the operation as one of first-rate importance: his cakes all piled before him, with a Loto, or brass vessel of water by his side, he squats down; and, thrusting large pieces into his mouth in rapid succession, he never has it empty a moment. When his appetite flags, he still feeds on, so resolute is he to accomplish the destruction of all the cakes he has prepared. The business over, he washes his cooking-vessels, drinks a good draught of water, and, throwing himself down, stretches, as the boa is said to do after gorging, and falls fast asleep, very frequently considerably swelled by the process. One of my bearers never makes less than twelve large cakes for himself, each being nearly an inch thick and more than half a foot in diameter; all of which he consumes with the most astonishing perseverance. These cakes are made of coarse uncleansed flour, and baked upon a tin plate; and are indeed not unlike the girdle cakes of the Highlands of Scotland, which should be classical food to one acquainted with the legends of that country, and as fond of them as I am.

Those who can afford a more expensive food,

generally live on rice mixed with a yellow grain called dhôl, and made savoury with sauces and pickles. The Bengalese are much annoyed in the upper provinces, where the price of rice is too high for them to enjoy their favourite food; and are a long time before they become perfectly reconciled to the wheaten cake. Dining, with these, is a more elaborate affair than with the former; for they have to knead their food into small round balls with their fingers and thumb, before they can venture to taste it; and the neatness with which they effect this, and the dexterity with which they pop the little balls into their mouths, is above all praise.

I looked with some interest at this ceremony when I first observed it, from the remembrance of my complete failure, when dining *à la Turque* on the river Nile, in the same feat. It was at the table of the French Colonel Séve, Suleiman Beh, who has since become well known as second in command to Ibrahim Pacha in the Morea. He was kind enough to invite us all to his boat, which had stopped for the night close to the ruins of Thebes. He had assembled all the func-

tionaries of his army; for he was on his way to Assouan to bring a portion of the newly-organized troops down towards Cairo, with a view, it was rumoured, of having them ready for an expedition against the Greeks. His état-major formed a singular group: there were two or three elderly men, with fine black beards, as grave and quiet as Turks ought to be; while the spirit of the party was centred in a middle-aged, florid-faced hero, with blue eyes and light brown mustachios. He was the drum-major-general of the army, and annoyed us all night with practising upon the table a row-dow-dow, as noisy, if not as correct, as any drummer in Christendom could devise. We sat cross-legged round a table, on which the first dish that appeared was vermicelli soup; and, alas! no spoons: this was succeeded by a species of curry, followed by spinach and eggs; and our discomfiture was complete. We were obliged to partake of it, and I shudder at the recollection, how "the silver skin was laced with the golden" stream!

September 26th.—At daylight, as usual, we were on horseback, and had the advantage of a

rainy ride to Muzuffernugger, which place we reached about seven o'clock. We found here an encampment of the Begum Somroo's troops from Serdhana. She was not among them, but was expected in a few days, on an excursion through her province. Their tents were rather carelessly arranged; and their general slovenliness did not speak much in favour of their commander's discipline. He was an Italian by birth, Signor Raggolini, and had married an adopted daughter of the Begum's: he had been some time in this country, and entered her service very soon after his arrival. He is not a very military-looking person, and makes a poor picture by the side of his troops, who are generally fine, stout-looking men; his dress, too, is as opposite as possible to theirs: a sky-blue jacket, looped in every direction with silver, decks his yellow little person; while a long caftan of quilted cotton, of a dirty brown colour, with turbans and sashes of white, forms the uniform of his army; trowsers, down to the ancles, generally of the same material as the rest, with tremendous russety-coloured shoes, bending upwards from the toe to a great height.

These troops carry swords and matchlocks; and, although they have not a very elegant appearance, when scattered about in small knots, the sentinels lounging on their posts, they look extremely wild and picturesque. In addition to this Signor Raggolini, (whose name, by-the-bye, the natives corrupt into an unfortunately appropriate one "Ragged-an'-lean Sahib,") the begum has an aid-de-camp, a Captain Dise, the son of a former general by an adopted daughter also, I believe. He is a half-caste; and his father was factotum to her highness not long ago: but she quarrelled with him upon some trifling matter, and dismissed him her service, and forbade him her presence. After several vain attempts to recover her favour, he established himself in one of her houses at Meerut, where she usually resides. She was determined to dislodge him; but he resolutely kept his ground. A native prince, or princess, is never at a loss for stratagem, and she had recourse to it. To draw the fox, she pretended to pardon him, and expressed great anxiety to see him once more. The general was too delighted at the prospect of reconciliation, and readily embraced her proposal

for an audience. At twelve o'clock, the day after the message, by her appointment, he presented himself at the palace gate, when his entrance was opposed by her guard, who told him her highness had resolved never to see him again, and desired that he should instantly retire. Disappointed and indignant, he returned to his former abode; and there, "unkindest cut of all!" he was met by another party of the guard, who had been sent round by a different road to take possession of the house during his absence! "The begum desires never to see you more," was again thundered in his ears, and so he was ejected from his last hold. After having served her faithfully all his life, he was driven forth, to reflect, in his old age, on the vanity of putting trust in princes.

So resolute a dame as Begum Somroo is not likely to be moved by pity or remorse. If all the stories told of her be true, it is a strange sight to see the honour and attention she meets with from a Christian society. Many of the worst tales are currently believed, particularly that sad one of her stretching a carpet over the ground, beneath which two female slaves were buried alive. She

smoked her pipe coolly, it is said, until she thought they were dead; afraid, if she had moved from the spot, that more tender-hearted people might have rescued them. In the present age, when these horrors are supposed to live in story alone, it is difficult to believe such cruelty possible, when confronted with the gay and smiling countenance of the perpetrator of them. We may really say, though from a very different cause, "Look in her face, and you forget them all," for a more lively old dame is not to be found. I have heard many instances of her bounty as well as of her cruelty; and I believe the Europeans about her person have no cause to be dissatisfied with her generosity. She is, however, a female Djezzar Pacha, and has all the caprice as well as the barbarity of a tyrant.

To descend to an inferior race of women:—we had moved so quickly, that it was necessary to lighten our camels, by having a portion of the baggage carried by bearers; and men being scarce, we were forced to enlist females into our train. Although they were well loaded, we did not consider it a reproach to our gallantry; for

stouter or more masculine damsels were never yet seen. They are tall and straight, with a smooth skin of a bright chestnut colour: a blue cotton boddice, which just reached below their bosoms, and a petticoat of the same fastened above the hips, (a long brown interval between the two garments,) formed their dress. They carry their loads upon their heads; and, holding themselves perfectly upright, move with the greatest quickness, swinging their bodies as the Irish women do, who carry fruit into Covent Garden market from the gardens in the neighbourhood of London. They are as good-humoured and talkative as their western prototypes; and, following each other in a string, laugh and jest with all their might. The male bearers seldom utter any sound in the course of their journeys, but a dismal grunt; the women have by far the advantage in lungs and spirits: in complexion and features they resemble very strongly the gipsies in our own country; and from their lively eyes and reckless expression, they seem to bear a close affinity to that soothsaying race. Their pay for the day's journey is very trifling; and, without waiting to rest, the

moment they received it, they tramped off again, although they had travelled well laden for nearly twenty miles.

Muzuffernugger is thirty-six miles from Meerut; and we determined to make the journey in one day, leaving our followers to finish it at their leisure. A gig was to meet us at Kutowlee, a walled town about sixteen miles on the road; and we could drive on, in defiance of the sun. At two in the morning, when the moon was at its height, we mounted, and moved for an hour along a very sandy track, with nothing for the eye to rest on, nor (what was still worse) to receive the rays of the moon. It was like riding over a desert.

There are no regularly defined roads throughout the upper provinces of India. They all appear to have been made by accident; and even with the light that we had, it was necessary to be careful of the stepping of our horses. The path was of soft sand, and the ruts made by the bullock-carriages (the only wheeled conveyances that pass over them,) were frequently more than a foot deep. Before the day had dawned, we rode into the gate of Kutowlee. As in all native towns, the

streets are very narrow and winding; and it behoves the traveller to keep a careful watch upon the direction he takes in passing through them, lest he be lost in the labyrinth. Although as quiet as death, it by no means had the appearance of a deserted village; it seemed, nevertheless, like one that was fast falling into depopulation. It required no great effort of imagination, to fancy that it had been visited by the plague; for human bodies, apparently lifeless, lay stretched in every direction through its lanes; and the only sound, besides the echo of our horses' feet, was an occasional snore, I think I must call it, which, aided by the night and the scene, might well have been mistaken for a dying moan.

It is the custom of the natives, at the warm season of the year, to sleep very much in the open air; and as they were scattered in all directions about, some on charpoys, (common cots,) and some on mats spread upon the ground, wrapped up in white cotton sheets, their very heads covered as if in their shrouds, the ride through their fallen ranks had something (coming suddenly upon them, as we had from a wide waste,) start-

ling in it. We found it necessary to move with great care, lest we should unfortunately rouse them more roughly than we would have wished.

The tatties, or mat frames, that generally close in the fronts of the houses during the night, were all open as they are by day, when propped up by poles, they serve the purpose of verandahs. The goods which lay upon the little terraces for sale, were moved to the inner apartments; and the children and old men occupied their places. There is a small serai in the town, at the door of which we found our saees or groom just arisen from performing his ablutions, and by his side a wrinkled old woman, who had the charge of the establishment, engaged in a similar occupation. She was pouring water into her hand, from a brass vessel; and so washing her face, in the deliberate, though not quite in the graceful manner of a cat. I was forcibly reminded, by the mode in which she 'dighted her grunzie,' of a similar allusion in one of Burns's songs:

> Auld Baudron by the ingle sits,
> And wi' her loof her face a washin.

The groom had performed this part of the ceremony, and was now sitting by the old crone, who certainly might have rivalled 'Willie's wife,' and was engaged in rubbing his teeth with a small twig of lime, in the most lack-a-daisical manner that can be conceived. I am afraid it is not quite delicate to introduce a scene at the toilette, but this forms as striking a picture of native manner, as either their cooking or their sleeping. We soon disturbed the groom; and, entering the buggy, drove towards Meerut, plunging, as we best could, through the deep sand, the saees running lightly by our sides. This part of their occupation is a most toilsome one: they are expected to keep up with a horse at a good trot; and generally manage it very well by laying hold of some portion of the carriage, contriving very dexterously to keep clear of the wheel in its motion, in the manner I have seen a dog, fastened to the axle of a cart, dodge about to avoid the heels of the horse.

Soon after we left Kutowlee, we saw the sun arise—a sight by no means uncommon in the East, (as all are early risers,) but always strikingly beautiful. From the bounds of these wide plains it rises

nearly as suddenly as at sea, and there is not a preceding or following tint that is lost to the eye. The moment, however, that it is fairly in the sky, there is an end of beauty: no hills, nor even woods, to soften its approach; it is too bright to look at, and a great deal too hot to bear.

At seven o'clock we reached Doolah, and found a horse waiting beneath a wide tree at the entrance to the village: near was a large well, at which all the damsels had assembled to draw their morning supply of water. Nothing can be more picturesque, and to our fancies more thoroughly oriental, than the moment, when "the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water." Their graceful robes and fine straight figures, with the various positions in which they are arranged, make the most interesting picture possible—some approaching with their empty pitchers lying on the sides upon their shoulders, while their children sit astride their hips; others return laden, with the pitchers on their heads, supported by the right hand, while the left is ready to draw the veil over the face lest any stranger should approach.

Round the well the utmost activity prevails. The one in this village is of brick, and from its sides rise several pieces of wood, like cranes, with pulleys at the end of them, which are always kept in tune by the constant drawing up and down of the pitcher. The splashing and chattering are quite amusing: it seems as if the women had thrown off all restraint in this occupation, and there is seldom a man near them to recall them to their usual bashful demeanour. I can easily conceive the joy they must feel in such a service, in the early part of the morning or the cool of the evening, after either an oppressive night or scorching day. This is one of the customs in the East that I contemplate with most pleasure.

I felt very thirsty from my long drive; and as I had no cup of my own, I feared I should find some difficulty in obtaining a draught of water. In Bengal, when I asked for a drink on a similar occasion, a man brought me a new earthen vessel, which he dashed to the ground in a thousand pieces the moment I had satisfied my thirst, lest any Hindoo should be polluted by using it after me; I was agreeably surprised to find myself better

treated here, although all were Hindoos. A woman sent me a brass vessel to drink from; and, when I returned it, merely emptied out the water I had left, and rubbed it over with sand, deeming a purification of some sort still absolutely necessary.

We soon changed horses, and pushed on for Meerut. Although approaching the largest military station in Upper India, the roads became worse as we drew near; and after jolting over the most despicable track for nearly two hours, we entered the broad plain on which that cantonment stands. It sometimes happens that the roads in the neighbourhood of a post are in tolerably good order, but these are exceptions; for no greater pains are taken by Europeans than by the natives in the approaches to their stations.

It is now the month of October, and the cold season has commenced, which is generally the period of gaiety and amusement. We have dinners, plays, and balls, and a large society, (about two hundred perhaps,) with, however, an overwhelming majority of men. The early complaint of our settlers in India may still be reasonably urged in the upper provinces—that there are no

means of becoming husbands: in Meerut, which, as I have said, is the largest station, there is but one unmarried lady. "But one halfpenny-worth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack!"—for I fancy there are at least one hundred and fifty single men. It too frequently happens that the posts, in the upper provinces, are without even that solitary temptation to a change of state; and to this, doubtless, many of the unfortunate connexions European officers have formed may be ascribed. The desolate situations young men are often reduced to, placed by themselves in remote districts, with no family within many miles, and no prospect of returning to England till at least declined into the vale of years, are almost enough to make them forget that they have a "home beyond the sea," deeply as that circumstance is generally inscribed upon the heart. I have often been amused at half-caste people, and those of a nearer approach to European, who, I think, are styled country-born, talking of England as their home. "I should like to go home" sounds singularly enough from the lips of one whose complexion might rival ebony: it is well that it should be

so, however, while the half-caste population is so rapidly increasing.

While writing of ladies, I may venture, *en passant*, to notice some of the customs of society, in which they are materially concerned. It is natural to suppose, that being in so small a proportion they must receive great attention, and it is but right that they should. I was much amused, the first large assembly I was ever present at, in the country, by the great sensation that was created in the company on the arrival of a carriage of ladies. I went somewhat early, and had scarcely time to look about me when a servant ran into the room in breathless haste, and, placing his hands together, muttered something to his master, who instantly rushed out of the chamber, followed by a train of gentlemen. The suddenness of the movement, and the important expression of the messenger's countenance, threw me into some alarm: if it had not been the midst of summer, I should have fancied the house had been on fire. In a moment, however, the fugitives returned, each bringing in a lady. They had barely time to conduct them to the seats allotted

for them, when another summons called them forth once more: the plot now began to thicken, and all took part in the race. Carriage after carriage arrived, and gentlemen and servants were running wildly along the hall, breathless and intolerably hot.

The ladies sit quietly in their carriages till the proper announcement has called the gentlemen to their assistance. Although the society is unquestionably very delightful, I think the strict etiquette preserved even in the houses of private individuals might be very advantageously dispensed with. It is a great nuisance to have your lot so firmly fixed in society as not to be able to change it even from inclination or inadvertency, without giving offence. Although these precise arrangements are very much confined to those of the highest offices, yet still the spirit of place pervades all ranks a great deal too much. I was a member of a committee to regulate a large ball on a particular occasion, when it occupied the greater part of a day to settle the order of our going in to supper: we found ourselves sitting as a Committee of Privileges. At length, a regular

table of precedence was made out and delivered to those gentlemen whose good fortune had cast them in a parallel rank with the ladies who were to grace the assembly, and who, to say truth, must very frequently have found themselves most uncongenially suited. Nothing can exceed the style in which such entertainments are given, even in situations so distant from the capital as Meerut. Native ingenuity, however, is not called forth to assist in the decorations, as it is with so much effect in the more southern parts of the East.

The most beautiful festival I ever witnessed was given some time ago near Columbo, by Sir Edward Barnes, then governor of the island of Ceylon. The Cingalese are famous for the manner of their light and ornamental buildings: in the course of twenty-four hours they garnish a palace that may remind you of the genii of the Arabian Nights. On the banks of the river near Columbo, and three miles above the stream from the usual point of embarkation, a splendid ball-room was built, so tastefully decorated, that it resembled a fairy palace: the pillars that sup-

ported the roof were covered with slips of the ola, which gave them the appearance of being fluted, an interval being left between each row, while the capitals were of plantain leaves and boughs of the ola interspersed, approaching nearly to the natural Corinthian: the roof was thatched with lemon grass; and within were columns and arches of the lightest and most fanciful appearance. Variegated lamps hung in festoons round the room, and, winding about the pillars, shone from among the flowers that encircled them, like bright jewels: a bridge of boats led from the opposite bank of the river to the banqueting-hall. At each end of it was a magnificent gate, and in the centre a triumphal arch; while on each side was a parapet hung with lamps and flowers and branches of the most graceful of the palm-trees. The company moved up the stream in large flat-bottomed boats towed by elephants; and nothing could surpass the beauty of the scene.

It was a little before sun-set when the ceremony began; but the return at night was beyond description magnificent: the vessels were carried down by the stream, and floated away with sufficient irregu-

larity: in two or three were stationed bands of music, that played the whole time. The banks of the river were illuminated; and constant discharges of cannon and bursts of fireworks were repeated during the descent. It was calculated that there were more than seventy thousand natives scattered about the banks of the river. They occasionally shouted in admiration of the sight; and the softer strains of the band were sometimes lost in the incessant beat of the tom-tom, the monotonous sound of which (a constant repetition of the two words that give it a name) is the most tiresome that ever annoyed the ear.

One of the principal amusements of Meerut during the cold weather is the theatre, of which I have already spoken. It is managed by some officer, who has the taste for, and who will take the trouble of, conducting its representations. I saw, on the night of my return, the performance of Macbeth so well done, that it was astonishing. No provincial stage in England could have managed the scenery, the music, or the general effect better; and for the acting—London, alas! now-a-days, falls very often short of it. Lady

Macbeth exhibited the singular novelty of being played by a gentleman, and remarkably well played too: this amateur has been long celebrated for his talents in the personification of the opposite sex; and, as I have seen him in Mrs. Malaprop, and Lady Macbeth, I may be allowed to say he is the most extraordinary actor, or actress, that ever wore the sock.

The commander-in-chief, with his splendid array, on his way from Delhi into Rohilcund, I believe, passed through Meerut, and remained in it a short time: the days were all activity in consequence, and the nights all festivity. He was accompanied by Colonel Skinner and a large body of horse; and a greater tribe was collected at Meerut than I think ever could have appeared there before, merely for the purpose of pleasure. Skinner's horse is a remarkably fine body of men; and they added considerably to the pageantry of the scene. Their commander bears the character of a noble fellow, and has all the air of a brave man and good leader. He is remarkably handsome, although very black; and I regretted not being able to see more of one who

does so much honour to the name we both bear. I should imagine, from his appearance, that he is two or three generations at least from his English ancestor—if, indeed, he be derived from such a source. He has several sons, and one of them is adjutant of his father's corps.

Dec. 3rd.—I left Meerut in the evening for Ghurmoktesir Ghaut—the port, it may be called, of that station on the Ganges. The distance is thirty-six miles, and I reached it at daylight in the morning, having travelled in a palanquin, by Dâk. I am not sufficiently accustomed to this mode of travelling to consider it in the least luxurious. Lolling in a palanquin may be thought in the west a mighty fine thing, but to me it is the most uncomfortable mode of moving possible. It is very true, you are able to lie down, and lounge away; but, alas! you cannot get up again; and the jumping motion might put you very comfortably to sleep, if the grunting of the bearers did not keep you awake. Every two hours, or so, if you are sufficiently practised in the conveyance to sleep, you are sure to be roused by the application for "buxees," from the bearers

who are about to be relieved. The new ones, too, generally thrust a piece of paper into your face, to learn whether you are the identical person for whom they were ordered, and whose name is written upon the scroll they hold.

On entering a town, the bearers vary the usual grunt, with which they enliven the way, by extolling the character of the person they are carrying in true Eastern hyperbole, not knowing even his name perhaps. The first trip I ever made by Dâk was from Meerut to Delhi. I am indeed but little practised; and just before entering the town I had fallen into a doze, from which I was awakened by the loud exclamations of my people in praise of some great man, as I imagined. They were shouting out, as we moved through the streets, "Make way for a great man;" "A mighty prince;" "The poor man's friend;" "The lion of war;" "Our father and mother;" with a hundred other honorable appellations. I expected the Great Mogul, at least, to pass me: but not a traveller was to be seen but myself, and I was the undisputed hero of all these fine phrases. Am I Giles, or am I not? thought I, or has some face-

tious caliph been playing me a trick? Like Abon Hassan I am to be king for a day. On finding that I had awakened, they roared my titles out still louder; and I entered a small tent beneath a tree, by the castle ditch, in spite of this magnificent proclamation, without a soul being there to notice me, and not even a breakfast provided for the "poor man's protector."

I arrived at the ghaut of Ghurmoktesir in the same splendid manner, the banks of the Ganges echoing my stately titles. My palace here was a very humble one indeed; at this season of the year, the water being very low, large vessels do not come even so high as Ferruckabad: I was obliged, therefore, to hire a country boat to convey myself and servants down the stream, until I should fall in with a budgerow. I had sent them forward a day or two before myself, in order that they might make my boat as comfortable as circumstances would permit; and now that I am fairly installed in it, I cannot do better than describe it.

It is about twenty feet long, and tolerably broad in the beam, with a thatched roof reaching from

the stern very nearly to the head, and supported by poles of bamboo; the sides wattled with a number of neatly contrived mats, which overlay each other, and are capable of being propped up to admit the light, or, what is of equal consequence, the air. Beneath the roof there are two apartments divided by a mat, the first of which is my kitchen, and the second, or aftermost, my hall of state. In the latter there is just room for a bed and a table; and, by way of keeping the dust and the insects from interfering with my quiet, my servants have hung it with different-coloured cloths of cotton—part, I fancy, of their summer wardrobe, which they have dedicated to the purpose. The floor is constructed of slips of bamboo, tied carelessly together, in which I not unfrequently catch my foot, to the great risk of an overthrow. On the top of the roof there is a frame of bamboo poles, from which several posts, of two or three feet high, arise, and to which the oars are tied: these are very long pieces of bamboo, with a round flat board at the end of them.

The men stand to their oars, and it requires all their strength to move them: the noise of the row-

ing over-head, and the frequent bumps of the vessel upon the numerous sandbanks, render it no very easy matter to follow any pursuit. The crew consists of a manjee and six men, with a little boy, the son of the master, about six years of age, and who is not considered too young to have the management of the helm: he indeed is the only one on board sufficiently vigilant for a Palinurus. When any of the men take his place, they soon fall asleep, and allow the boat to drift where it will. We have a mast, which is much of a piece with the rest of the bark, crooked and rickety; while the sail is the most ragged and absurd-looking thing imaginable. The sails of these kind of boats are calculated for any purpose but holding the wind. I have frequently seen a fleet in full sail, with not a whole breadth of canvass on board any one of the vessels; the crew, squatting on the top of them, like monkeys on the roof of a cottage, with as much complacency as if they manned the best-appointed ship in the world.

Their navigation, to a person unacquainted with the river, (which all Europeans are likely to

be,) is the most incomprehensible: those, however, who are fond of interfering, are generally forced to repent it. I have always found that the best method of rigging and managing a boat, is that followed by the country you happen to be in. It is not easy, however, to convince the *Sahib Logue* of this; and many are the quarrels and accidents that occur in consequence. The natives, although indifferent enough about death when it comes, are not prone to seek it; and a person, careful about his safety, cannot do better than trust it to them.

Between Meerut and Ferruckabad the country is sufficiently uninteresting: the river is narrow and low, and the banks are generally of sand: the stream is not very rapid either, and we got on but slowly.

Dec. 8th.—In the afternoon we arrived at Ferruckabad, and pushed our way to the shore, through a number of similar boats, a little below the town, and above the military cantonment of Futteghur. A ghaut on the Ganges always presents a considerable degree of bustle and interest. We were not exactly in high day yet;

early in the morning, or sun-set, being the great hours of general rendezvous. I here met my brother, who had left me soon after we descended from the hills for Shahjehanpoor, in Rohilcund, from which, being only fifty miles from the shores of the river at this point, he had ridden over to see me. As my apartment was too small to entertain a second person, we resolved upon taking possession of a room in a large house close by us, which stood apparently deserted above the river. We were fastened to a post in 'the compound,' as it is called, of this palace, for it really seemed to be such.

We wandered through its halls for some time, without perceiving a human being. A water vessel, to tell the hour by, which was not yet filled, was the only thing to intimate a superintendence of some description. This style of clock is common in many parts of India, and is more simple, and fully as true, as the hour-glass. A brass basin, with a small hole at the bottom, is placed on the surface of a tub of water: it takes a fixed time, generally an hour, to fill; and then it sinks. The guardian of this clock soon made

his appearance, however, armed with a formidable sword and short baton, which latter was for announcing the time upon a gong, to the workmen of an indigo factory close at hand.

This personage was a worthy representative in figure, as well as office, of the notorious time-beaters of St. Dunstan's, to whose complexion too his was a near approach. He was dressed up to the ears in dark quilted cotton, and a dirty piece of cloth bound under his chin, as if he had been bandaged up for the mumps. This is a very common appendage to a man's face in the upper provinces; and, by swelling out his cheeks, gives him something of a ludicrously pompous expression: I always fancied it was for protection against the cold, till I learned that the bucks adopt the plan for the purpose of improving their whiskers. I do not know whether this happy discovery has reached the west yet; but, as it may be of service to many, I think it would be wrong in me to suppress it. They have nothing to do but to oil their whiskers well; and, brushing them in the proper direction, bandage them up, to use the phraseology of the receipt-book, as tightly as they

can bear; and if they do not look the better for it, it is not my fault at any rate. There is no personal ornament, of which the Mahometans are more proud than their beards and moustaches; and the greater part of their life, I verily believe, is devoted to their cultivation. I have often seen them sitting, with a small looking-glass in one hand, the head turned conceitedly aside, while the other was engaged in trimming, smoothing, and curling the objects of their devotion.

We found a European inhabitant living in solitary grandeur in this magnificent mansion, which had been built by a firm of merchants in Calcutta, who failed some years ago, and whose indigo factories are now worked for the benefit of the estate. The young man, who very kindly permitted us to occupy a room in the house, made a third to our party: he was a Scotchman, and had the superintendence of an indigo concern near Allehghur. The Europeans, in the upper part of India, are not generally planters, but manufacturers only: they buy the plant from the natives, and encourage them to grow, by always becoming purchasers, and securing it to themselves by out-

bidding the native merchants. Their profits this way are not so great, perhaps, although I should imagine they must be more secure from loss. They have the superintendence of very large establishments, and should have an intimate knowledge of the native character, in order to conduct them with advantage both to their employers and their servants. I am inclined to suspect they are deficient in this quality, principally because I seldom hear an indigo planter speak well of the people under him.

At night I returned to my little nest; and, in order to be out of the way of noise, had my boat removed to the side of a sandbank in the middle of the stream; and after breakfast on the 9th again dropped downwards.

Between Ferruckabad and Cawnpore there is little to interest in the scenery on the shores of the river, or in the towns and villages that occupy them. The women, coming down to the river-side for water; the bathing in the neighbourhood of a ghaut, with now and then a pious Brahmin repeating his prayers in solitude and nakedness in the stream; or, as evening closes in, a devout

Mussulman kneeling on the end of a cloth, bowing his head towards the prophet's shrine—constitute the variety of native manners. This latter is not very common; but when it does occur, it is the most striking of all the ceremonies. In a perfectly Mahometan country it is never omitted; but I do not think the faithful in India are so particular about the matter. I have seen the banks of the Nile, at sun-set, scattered with the pious of the villages around, who happened to be away from the neighbourhood of their mosques at the call to prayer; while the stillness of the evening was only broken by the loud "Alla hu!" of the muezzin. I must do my own servant, however, the justice to say that he never dispenses with the needful ceremony. Soon after we halt for the evening he retires to the shade of a tree; and, placing his carpet on the ground, kneels upon it, looking towards the east; his turban (which upon these occasions only he takes off) is placed upon the other end of the carpet; and as he bows his head, it just measures his length.

The Hindoos, at this time, are very differently engaged, preparing their dinners; they seem to be

as happy as possible when this hour comes about, on the banks of the holy stream. I am very anxious to hasten down to Calcutta, and wish to remain as short a time as I can on the water; but so elaborate is the ceremony of cooking and eating, that I am forced to sacrifice several hours to it. It was with some difficulty I overcame their desire to cook in the morning as well as the evening; but at length we compromised the matter. At ten every morning I agreed to allow them to go on shore for a quarter of an hour, to eat meal and water: this they accomplish with much greater celerity than I should ever wish to do. They throw two or three handfulls of flour into a brass dish; and, sprinkling it with water, swallow it with as much greediness as if it were the most savoury mess in the world.

The suttoo of this morning (for that is the name of the meal) has cost me a great deal of inconvenience; for my sirdar, or head servant, who always bore my keys in a bunch at his girdle, has thought proper either to sacrifice them to the river-god, by dropping them into the stream, or abandon them on the bank, to be washed off at

his leisure. I must allow that he feels the annoyance much more than I do; for he has been sitting for nearly an hour in front of a trunk, peeping curiously, from time to time, into the key-hole, as if to discover some charm to open it, some "open sesame" to burst its fastening asunder. So devoted are all the servants to their particular employments, that I am sure he feels as miserable as if he had lost an only child; for my keys being hitherto his sole care, deprived of them, he knows not where to turn; I refused to have the trunks broken open, and the sorrow of the sirdar suddenly pervaded the whole party. If I had been Bluebeard himself, and the lost bunch contained the key of the fatal closet, there could not have been greater consternation:—one man instantly proposed to return in quest of the keys; and, as the river was very winding, hoped to be able to overtake the boat. He set off in high spirits with an encouraging "acha" from all around, and we floated quietly down the stream.

It was beautifully calm, and by no means uncomfortably hot, even when exposed to the sun on the roof of my barge. I could not persuade my crew

to row, and lazily indeed we drifted on. They threw a plank overboard; and, fastening it by both ends to the head of the boat, left it to assist our descent. The little ripple that this caused, gave me an idea that I was going faster, and I was obliged to be satisfied with the thought. The banks on each side were high, of loose sand which crumbled and fell into the stream whenever we approached them, which we generally did with a good bump; for when the current sweeps past a headland, they never attempt to fend off the vessel, but let it take its chance of going to pieces, or pushing its way through the obstacle. The water is shallow, and the river about as broad as the Thames at London bridge, with occasionally a long ridge of sand just above the surface, well tenanted by crocodiles. These animals lie basking in the sun, and may easily be mistaken for logs of wood: on the approach of a boat, they quit their resting-place, and take to the water; but so slowly and indifferently, that they do not appear to be in the least alarmed. I have seen the natives, when towing a vessel up the stream, walk boldly through the water, to the very bank from which the animals

were moving; while they sink into it to hide themselves. I never heard of a man, while thus engaged, being seized by one, although they have been known to haunt the neighbourhood of a ghaut, and draw the bathers under the stream. It is a death, however, rather to be desired by the Hindoos than avoided; so that I believe a place so selected by the crocodiles will attract by its additional sanctity rather than frighten by its danger. I know no sight so truly disgusting as a sandbank covered with crocodiles: it makes the blood run cold to look at it.

About sun-set, the servant, who had gone to search for the keys, returned, and was greeted with loud yells. He had lost his labour, and returned without them, when the mysterious anxiety was cleared up. "Break open the trunks, or we shall be all starved," was the cry of my sirdar. I found he had chosen to lock up the meal belonging to himself and fellow bearers in one of my trunks; I was forced, therefore, to comply, and restored them all to good-humour.

Dec. 11th.—At ten in the morning we arrived at the ghaut of Cawnpore, which may be called

the highest port upon the Ganges of any importance; for below this the river is wider, and navigable for larger vessels than those that can be used above it. Goods of any bulk are frequently taken from the boats that bring them hither, and divided among smaller ones for the purpose of more easily ascending the stream: the banks, therefore, are full of business and bustle. I could have changed my little bark for a more splendid one if I had desired; but I found myself so snug in it, that I did not care about "the dignity of a budgerow," which my servants urged as a reason for my making the change; (*Nam-ka-wastie*), 'on account of your name;'—a feeling, that has great influence with the natives, as indeed it should with all people; I hope, however, mine is not likely to be disgraced by my continuance under the thatched roof.

Brydone, in his lively Tour of Sicily, relates the horror of his *valet de place*, lest the reputation of their whole household should be lost by his master walking across the street in Palermo. The risk I run is pretty much of the same nature. The native town of Cawnpore is nothing very extraordinary;

but a number of pretty bungalows are seen from the river, the habitations of the English officers. It is a large military station, equal in extent and consequence to Meerut, and more full of dust and disagreeables than ever that place was. I was more concerned, however, in the scene around me; for, anxious to move on, I would not quit my boat, lest all should take advantage of my absence, and disperse themselves through the bazaar.

I found myself in the midst of a singular and an active people. Every description of vessel that can be imagined was collected along the bank: the pinnace, which, with its three masts and neat rigging, might have passed for a ship; budgerows, the clumsiest of all clumsy things, with their sterns several times higher than their bows; and baulęahs, ugly enough, but lightly skimming along, like gondolas, compared with the heavy craft about them; the drifting haystacks, which the country boats appear to be when at a distance, with their naked crews straining every nerve upon their summits, and cheering themselves with a wild, and not unfrequently a sweet song;

panchways, shooting swiftly down the stream with one person only on board, who sits at the head, steering with his right hand, rowing with his foot, and in the left hand holding his pipe. A ferry-boat, constantly plying across the stream, adds to the variety of the scene by its motley collection of passengers—travellers, merchants, and faquirs, camels, bullocks, and horses all crowded together.

The vessels fastened to the shore are so closely packed, that they appear to be one mass, and from their thatched roofs and low entrances might easily pass for a floating village. Their inhabitants are scattered along the bank, some cooking, some smoking, and many abusing each other to the utmost of their power. When a newly-arrived vessel endeavours to take up a position among those which have already assumed their stations, the uproar is tremendous. The people of the moored boats, who perceive that a concussion is inevitable, never attempt to ward it off, but join in loud and unmeasured abuse of the crew of the intruding one, who spring to the roof of their boat, and, waving their arms in a wild manner, return it with double energy.

I have watched these scenes of "wordy war," till I thought I should have dropped with laughter. As the "impending" bark draws near, the noise becomes greater and greater; till at length, bump! and all is terrible confusion. The boats below the one thus struck are moved from their position, and up rise their crews to vindicate their prior right of ground. Any of the dandees, boatmen who may be on the shore engaged at their meals, fly from them to unite their voices to those of their mates; and indeed the passengers, who should be indifferent to the matter, cannot resist the attraction: all seem to be impelled by some magic spell to hasten to the spot, and join in the clamour: like the negro in the beautiful tale of Vathek, who by some uncontrollable impulse drew the inhabitants of every place, through which he roved, to kick him in his course.

I have just recovered from an unexpected descent caused by such an invasion as I have described. My boat got so entangled with two or three that had been loosened from above, that we were swept bodily down the stream, and had proceeded some hundred yards before we could

regain our ground. I determined to draw out of the crowd, and am now fastened to the bank a little below the cantonment. I have placed myself, however, in the midst of the washing-ground, and am entertained by the thumping of the linen upon a stone, and the pavior-like grunt from the washermen, that accompanies the action. I meant to have quitted Cawnpore at twelve o'clock; but when once, after a short absence from such an attraction, the natives can get into a bazaar, it is no easy matter to collect them together again. I shall be delayed till sun-set in consequence, and the people are coming down in crowds to bathe and draw water. Under a peeput tree a little above the town, there is a small lingam, which has a wreath of flowers round it, and several are lying on the altar on which it is placed: I observed many men and women touch it on their passing by after bathing; and then, returning the hand to their foreheads, pour a little water upon it, and pass on.

Dec. 13th.—I am now passing the city of Sirajpoor; a very pretty one, but apparently in ruins. This is generally the appearance, I think, of a native

town when viewed from any distance, on account of an irregularity in the mode of building, and an unfinished look that the houses have; one portion, perhaps, being painted, while the rest have the bricks exposed, or the plastering but partially completed. Such a want of method, however, has the effect of improving the picture; and as they generally are well surrounded by trees, they make most interesting objects. A distant view of a native town is certainly the best: they are all pretty much alike in their interior arrangements, and few have any objects within them of great interest. I am talking only of the common towns on the banks of the Ganges, not the places of note, as Allahabad, Benares, &c.

Sailing rapidly down the river, as I am obliged to do, I find few incidents to vary the scene. At night, I am very careful to have my little bark moored in the centre of the stream to some sandbank, of which there are a great many; for my people declare, as long, at least, as we are skirting the territory of the king of Oude, that there is great probability of being attacked by Decoits. These marauders commit their depre-

dations in too large numbers for my party to oppose, even if they were more warlike than they are likely to prove: having the water between us and the enemy, therefore, is a prudent arrangement.

The motley passengers of the Ganges were increased this morning by a large party of my own countrymen and women, formed by a division of the sick, and soldiers' wives belonging to a king's regiment on its march from Ghazeepore to Cawnpore. When the corps moves by land, the hospital and women are sent by water, under the command of an officer, whose service is by no means to be envied.

They were all packed into boats similar to the one I am sailing in, at the rate of fifteen or twenty to each, not including the children, who seemed to me to be without end.

There was a light breeze, and their vessels were sailing up the stream: the women were lounging upon the roofs, and the children peeping through the matting at the sides: shirts, gowns, and caps were stuck upon every part of the rigging, and fluttered away in the wind; while pots, pans,

and kettles were fastened about the bamboos on the chopper (thatched) roof. There were at least fifty boats, and they were spread irregularly across the river; and many a bump I received in my passage through them, and many a curse, I am sorry to say, "both loud and deep," when the head of my boat, (which, by-the-bye, is painted like an alligator's,) poked into the table of a breakfasting party, as my unskilful little helmsman endeavoured to thread his way through the fleet.

In the rear of this division of Amazons came the sick, who gave a still more singular variety to the party. They were in their dressing-gowns and night-caps, and perched about the different parts of their boats: they are allowed more room than the healthy; and although I think the hospital transport might be better managed than it is, they seemed tolerably comfortable. When there is no wind, the boats are towed up; and being obliged to follow each other, have not so amusing an appearance as when thus scattered over the surface. I learned that this formed the first division, and that the second was a day or two in the rear. The

fleet attracted the observation of all the neighbouring villagers: the women paused on the banks, with their pitchers on their heads, to notice their white sisterhood with astonishment.

I have often wondered what these sable damsels can think of the extraordinary beings of their own order, in European society; for they are, in every possible respect, as opposite to each other, as if distinct animals; and the native women look at them as if they believed they really have nothing in common.

I soon lost sight of the Amazonian fleet, and fell into uninterrupted quiet till the end of the day. Just before sun-set, I had my boat fastened to the right bank of the river, beside a little village; and, on my return from paying it a visit, I found I was not to be the sole tenant of the ground; for the second division of the women had arrived, and their boats were moored in a line above mine.

It was now just dark, and they were all landed, and running wild and half-naked among the long grass and few trees around—screaming, laughing, and capering like so many bacchanals. The

boatmen were cooking their dinners in front of their vessels, under great apprehension of pollution from the uncontrolled pranks of these furies, who threatened to overturn their messes at every step. I am not surprised at the pleasure these women feel at liberation, after twelve long hours of such confinement. They make a much greater sensation in a native village than a whole regiment of men; for the villagers fly at their approach. Such a command is a novel one, somewhat, for an officer; although I shrewdly suspect that I am miscalling it sadly when I say a command.

CHAPTER VIII.

Confluence of the Jumna and the Ganges—Travels to holy places—Town of Mirzapoor—Various kinds of fish—Emblems of mortality—Hindoo melodies—Fort of Chunar—Route to Benares—A snake-charmer—City of Benares—Ceremony of bathing—Female bathers—Ghaut of Benares—A suttee—Devoted widows—Self-immolation—The Suttee—Passage of the Ganges—Scene of tumult—Embarking horses—The Soane and the Ganges—Ghaut of Dinapore—A life of indolence—Places of worship—Arrival at Patna—Leave of absence—A native city at night—Return of the crew—Wages in advance—Pay of boatmen—Pinnaces—Trade of Monghir—Blacksmiths and beggars—Hindoo charity.

DEC. 14th.—At daylight in the morning my neighbours and myself got under weigh; and by two o'clock I arrived at Allahabad, and moored off a bank close to the point of the fort where the Jumna and Ganges join. An annual fair happened to be held on the very spot, and I found a large

party of both sexes assembled to celebrate it. It was a religious fair, and took place on the very spot of the confluence of the two rivers. There did not seem to me to be any thing sold: bathing and praying were the chief occupations. A great number of platforms, about eight or ten feet square, with long legs to them, stood in the water: they had canopies above them, and were as booths in English fairs; for in them people frequently sat, as if to rest themselves after having waded through the river to reach them. The Brahmins, however, seemed to be the peculiar masters of each, for they never moved from their seats; but, occupying the centre with their rosaries in their hands, remained at their posts, to administer to the spiritual wants of those who visited them.

It was a very pretty scene: the women had their holiday clothes on, and shone in rosy scarfs among the crowd. Some of the shorter ones were frequently up to their shoulders in wading through the stream; and I observed that they all felt great pleasure on reaching the line that marked the meeting of the waters, which is now very clearly defined—the Jumna being a bright

blue, and the Ganges having still its sandy colour. From a little distance the concourse had a curious appearance. The seats, which the Brahmins occupied, were on the surface of the river; and they seemed to be floating upon it, in the positions in which those suspected of being witches, in the good old times, were forced to assume to undergo the test of their virtue.

The fort has a very fine appearance from my position: there is now a long tract of sand between it and me, however, which, when the river is at its height, is under water. This is the season it is at its lowest. My Hindoo servants joined in the operations that were going on, and I rather think related some of their travels to places of even superior sanctity to Allahabad; for they seemed to excite a great degree of interest in their hearers, in some of which I shared, if I may judge by the looks that were every now and then directed towards me. There is an invisible cause of the greater holiness of Allahabad, over other places where rivers join; for a subterranean one is supposed to unite in this spot with the Ganges and Jumna.

I descended a species of cave within the fort by

a flight of steps to a dark narrow passage, at the end of which there is the trunk of a tree still alive, although the air is quite excluded, and the rock which terminates the cave is moist with water, which the people believe arises from the course of the Seeraswattee, the mysterious river. Be that as it may, the belief is not a whit more foolish than that held by the Maltese, who deem that St. Paul's Cave, in their island, never diminishes, though thousands every day carry off its chalk.

Dec. 15th.—For some time after quitting Allahabad, I thought I could distinctly trace the courses of the two rivers; and I was pleased to witness their junction, after having toiled so much to pass the mighty barrier that divides their sources: to have seen the first and last habitations, too, watered by the Jumna, was a great satisfaction. What is Cursali, by the side of the king of worshipped places; and poor little Dorali, to the sacred city I am now approaching? We soon, however, floated past the blue stream of the Jumna, and went merrily on between high banks of very little interest, until, about sun-set, we reached Mirzapoor. It is a very large place, and stretches along the bank of the river for some distance: its

ghaut was full of people, and its port crowded with vessels. In the town were all the varieties of mosques, temples, and houses; and, as my boatmen assured me, very capital bazaars.

I knew the consequence of permitting my people to land; and preferred passing its attractions, and remaining a few hours near some small village. It is evident, from the greater number of boats on the river, that we are fast reaching a country of more consequence and greater population. Every hour we pass a number of fishing-boats, and are well supplied with descriptions of their contents: I do not, however, like more than two or three kinds of the fish of the Ganges. The quantity that swarms in its waters is beyond all belief: they would be nearly as difficult to enumerate as the fish of the sea; and the lives of those who follow the trade of fishermen are neither laborious nor unprofitable. They seem to be quite satisfied if they catch two or three tolerably large fish, which may bring them something even under a rupee; for the *matériel* of the service is very simple and cheap.

A large town, like Mirzapoor, springs up so suddenly on the banks of the river, without any long

suburb to announce its vicinity, that you would be struck by its size, even were it much less than it really is. When it possesses so large a population, however, as nearly 300,000, how great must the contrast be to the little villages above and below it!

When it was nearly dark I stopped, to enable my people to cook and dine, determined to reach Benares to-morrow. There is a small village not very far from us; and close to the banks of the stream lies a charpoy, or native bedstead, which has lately, no doubt, been the bier of some Hindoo, whose body has, by this time, regaled the vulture and the crow in its progress down the holy river. Such memorials of mortality are not unfrequent. The cots, on which the bodies are placed, are put sufficiently near the water to allow them to be washed off; and, floating along the surface, they are often seen in a voyage up the river, with birds of prey seated upon them.

Dec. 16th.—We had a most beautiful night, as calm as possible; and I was kept awake (that I might observe it) by the voices of my rowers, who murmured a very sweet air, for I cannot call it singing, to keep their oars in time. A most dis-

cordant yell rose from the banks, which drowned, now and then, the softer accents of my boatmen: it was caused by the united tones of the jackalls and the watchmen; the latter sat among their cucumbers and sugar-canes. I know not which screamed the loudest. I could not gather the meaning of the song the crew of my boat chanted, but the words sounded softly enough. The moaning of their voices seemed to me to be like what is understood in Scotland by a "sugh," and might very well have passed for a hushaby, when the nurse had nearly succeeded in murmuring herself to sleep, as well as her infant. I think the words of the Hindoo melodies are scarcely worth recording; such I mean as are sung by the working-classes. They celebrate eating and sensuality generally so much, that they might seem to disprove the Indian's claim to great abstinence, which, from their devotions to their meals, I have already questioned.

"The jocund day
Stood tiptoe on the misty mountain-top,"

as we came within view of the fort of Chunar; and, by the time we were abreast of it, the haze had cleared away from the Ghoruckpoor

hills—an uneven range, and the first elevations we had yet seen in the whole length of the river from Meerut. The fort stands upon the top of a high rock hanging over the river, with towers and walls down its sides to the water. It is conspicuous from the rocks around by its dark grey stone; and, as we passed it before sun-rise, appeared to frown gloomily upon us from its inaccessible height. A sepoy sentry, pacing up and down one of its platforms, was all the indication of life it displayed. It reminded me much of the Castle of Dumbarton, although it had more works to the water side; and there was nothing in the scenery around to destroy the fancy.

A turn in the river made the fort appear in the middle of the stream, and it seemed well calculated to guard the pass. It was altogether a beautiful scene; and rising as it does above such wide and unvarying plains, like a green spot in the desert, I was loth to quit it. In our progress towards Benares, we kept close to the east bank of the river; and when distant from it two or three hours, had an amusing variety of travellers towards the sacred city to enliven the route. The road on the shore appeared so crowded,

that I imagined some fair was to be held; but I learned that that was not the case, and the concourse was by no means unusual. There were even whole families: there was a father carrying two baskets balanced across his shoulder on a pole; his cooking-pots and meal in one, while in the other, "nestled curious, there an infant lay." The little thing sat as comfortably as possible, covered up to its chin in clothes, and turning its black head about in the most independent manner. If I had not seen this sort of travelling-cradle before, I should have taken its inmate for one of a litter of puppies, with its muzzle poked out of its bed. The mother followed with a bundle on her head, and a child upon her hip; while two or three other little things trotted away by her side.

I was much struck with the business-like manner in which all parties were pursuing their journey: there was no lounging nor pausing on the road; men, women, and children, pushed on as fast as they could. There were crowds of beggars, however, who were very glad to stay their course for the chance of a few pice, and their

whining exclamations were incessant. "Something to eat," was the universal cry, which was always accompanied, by the women most particularly, by an expressive display of their emptiness, the gathering up of their wrinkled skins in their hands, to prove how much room there was within for more nourishment.

Some grave-looking Brahmins, well covered with clothes, were moving soberly along upon little tattoos; while others sat more at their ease beneath the conical-shaped canopies of their carriages, almost lost in the midst of their goods and their clothes. The bullocks that draw them are generally handsome animals, very fat and very sleek: some of them have the honour of bearing the charms of the other sex, as we may gather from the occasional glances that their bright black eyes shoot forth from between the folds of the curtains that seem envious to conceal them.

Among other adventurers to the city, was a snake-charmer, who took advantage of a pause in my passage to sit down on the bank, and pipe to his pupils, which reared their crests, and appeared to take real delight in the music. He had two

which he took from a bag, and handled with the most perfect indifference. They seemed to be equally careless about his touch, and occasionally wound round his arms and his neck with great familiarity.

The approach to a fair, or a horse-race, in our own country, cannot afford more variety or interest than an every-day assemblage in the neighbourhood of Benares, if these be the common objects, which I am assured they are. I saw also some of the pilgrims, with whose errand I became so well acquainted at Gungoutri, carrying vessels of that water into the city; they were slung over their shoulders in little baskets: among the crowd was one man with his arm fixed above his head and his fist clenched, the nails of his fingers grown through and hanging in strips down the back of his hand.

I am not going to give a description of the city of Benares; for that has been so frequently and so well done, that it would be unnecessary, even if I had passed sufficient time there to enable me to do so. So large a town (for its population is nearly six hundred thousand) must form a grand object from the river; and where all, or

the greater part of the inhabitants are engaged in the cleanly rite of bathing in the sacred stream, the spectacle is beyond all belief beautiful. Soon after daylight, the daily ceremony begins; and until the sun grows warm, the crowds at the river, with the parties drawing towards it, or returning from it, fill the whole place with animation. While I was floating before the ghauts in admiration of the scene, it seemed to me like some fairy dream—so unlike was it to any thing I had ever witnessed. In Hurdwar it is a more hasty ceremony, and I think a purely religious rite; but here the devout, the indifferent, and the profane are so mingled together, engaged in their different occupations of praying, washing, and playing, that it is hard to say which party predominates.

The women seem to be in fully as great number as the men, and have not a separate ghaut from them: they always, however, stand lower in the stream, and the deference that is paid to their situation by the men is very great. Both sexes stand up to their waists in the water, and occasionally dip their heads beneath it; but I

never observed any one swim out. There are many who do not like the dipping part of the affair, any more than the fair bathers on our own coast: these always carry with them a brass vessel, which they fill constantly, and pour over their heads. I have seen them repeat this operation twenty times at least without pausing.

I could observe Brahmins performing their prayers, and others making offerings, while their neighbours were washing their clothes and splashing away at a rate quite enough to shake the gravity of any but a Brahmin. It was amusing to see a fat old priest waddle from the stream like a turtle, and take up his position on the steps of the ghaut; while, not far from him, the light forms of the women rose from the wave, and stood with their transparent drapery floating about them, to comb their long locks—like mermaids in all but their want of mirrors. When their hair is nearly dry, they hold their clean robes like a screen round their figures; and, shaking the wet ones off them, draw the others close, and are dressed in a moment. The figures approaching the ghaut, some of them in blue and rose-coloured

scarfs, as well as white, with their pitchers on their heads and their children by their sides, give a still more picturesque effect to the scene. The number of boats that are passing up and down the river, the splashing of the oars, and the song of the rowers, with the screams of the children, who, without their consent to the ceremony, are getting well ducked, complete the picture: and such a picture can certainly be exhibited no where but on the banks of the Ganges, and in no part of those populous shores so well as at the ghauts of Benares. The sun was not so high, but that the domes and minarets of the Holy City were reflected in the stream below; and it appeared that the town, as well as all its sons and daughters, had fled to the bosom of the sacred river.

I was not able to linger long before so lively an assemblage, and floated away towards Ghazeepore. The banks on each side of the river improve very much in their soil and cultivation, and towns come really quickly upon us. At a short distance, in a direct line, but a long way off from the windings of the river, I saw a thick column of smoke rise to the sky: I looked at it from the

roof of my boat through a glass, and could plainly perceive a large crowd of people assembled round the pile, which I was convinced it was. My boatmen said they had no doubt it was a suttee, for they were frequent in the neighbourhood of Ghazeepore. I desired them to push on, in hopes that I might be in time to witness the conclusion of the ceremony; for, alas! from the thickness of the smoke, the sacrifice had begun. It happened unfortunately, as it generally does, "the more hurry the less speed;" for we ran upon more sand-banks than we had ever done before: and although I did not draw any dire omen from the mounting blaze of the funeral pile, it seemed very likely to drive me from my course, or ship-wreck my bark; and it was dark before I reached the point.

The crowd had dispersed, and some stragglers on the shore confirmed our belief that it was a suttee. The woman, they said, was very young, and had just been married: she had no children, and was burnt by her own desire. I felt sorry I had not reached the spot in time, from a better motive, I hope, than mere curiosity. When the

most eloquent persuasion fails, however, (the silent appeal of a babe to its mother,) it is not likely that an accidental visiter could have any influence: yet I think the opportunity of expressing horror at such rites should never be lost by a European; for although no good may immediately spring from it, it must tend much to the discouragement of it.*

If a writer were in search of pathetic subjects for his pen, he could not do better than seek for them among the annals of devoted widows in India. I remember reading in a Number of the Missionary Register of some years ago, a very sad tale of a young bride, whose betrothed husband was seized by the cholera morbus on the very day the nuptials were to have been solemnized. The relations of both parties had assembled in the town where the ceremony was to take place; and many had come from a great distance. As the lovers were of rich and high caste families, grand preparations were made to do ho-

* When this passage was written, the Government had not issued their prohibition of the crime.

nour to the occasion. Instead of the joy and merriment that all were anxiously awaiting, death of the most dreadful nature called for their assistance. In a few hours after his attack, the husband died; and his young widow, (for so she resolved to consider herself,) although but his affianced bride, declared her intention of being burnt upon his funeral pile. At first some doubt arose as to the legality of the sacrifice, the marriage not having been completely solemnized. The laws of Menu, alas! do not give the benefit of a doubt. The result of the deliberation between her relations and the Brahmins was, that she was every way his wife; and the shaster, considering the bride fully bound to the husband by the vow she had plighted to him, permitted a voluntary immolation. Funerals must be sudden in this country: so the same noon, that was to have seen her happiness, now witnessed her destruction; the same crowd surrounded the pile, that was to have hailed with shouts of gratulation the bridal procession. It was still a holiday to them, however; for music accompanies the ceremony, and shouts of mirth rend the air. "I am persuaded that the English

breast has not a more joyous sensation on beholding the launch of a ship, than these inhuman beings experienced at the launch of an immortal spirit into an awful eternity!"—So says a writer, in the same pages, from which I have gathered the story, in his description of a similar act.

The widow, whose expiring flame I had witnessed, was very young, and had but just married: her husband might have died equally unexpectedly with the unfortunate hero of the foregoing tale. It was no wonder that her fate should have occupied my thoughts during the rest of the night; and I may be excused for dwelling a little longer upon the subject. They had no business, I confess, to assume the shape they have done; but as I passed Ghazeepore and its fields of roses by night, I was not able to dwell upon their beauties: although at this season of the year "the garden of Gul" was rich in bloom, I had no other employment for my pen.

THE SUTTEE.

The evening sun-beams threw their golden light,
And smiling usher'd in the bridal night;

The gay procession wound its happy way
In colours brilliant as the jocund day.
The pipe, the viol, and unceasing drum,
Proclaim to all, the blooming bride is come!
Light dancing maids the gaudy train prolong,
And Gunga's banks are startled, too, with song.
Thousands rush forth the joyous scene to hail,
And lend their voices—lest the music fail;
The bride reclined, in costly jewels dress'd—
Jewels less bright than hope within her breast;
Of sweetly-scented flowers, a snowy braid,
Pure as the fancies of th' espoused maid,
In her black hair a striking contrast show,
While o'er her neck the sable ringlets flow.
The bride reclined; a crimsom litter bore
Her blushing charms along the sacred shore.
What joy is breaking from her large dark eye—
The vivid lightnings of a tropic sky!
The rosy veil is archly drawn aside
To show the glances she affects to hide.
'Tis all a modest maiden dare betray—
The sudden sparkle of a meteor's play.
No hand may give those features to the light,
Save his who takes her to his hall to-night.
Hark, from that hall what happy spirits break!
What joyous revelry the echoes wake!
Lo, the young lord awaits her at the porch,
While mid-day bursts from each attending torch.

The maid has reach'd her bridegroom's home at last:—
The morning came, and all her joy had pass'd;
Death had gone over like a wild simoom,
And mark'd her youthful husband for the tomb.
And must he only suffer? Still the pride
Of youth and beauty lives, the lovely bride.
She, too, must die: some savage god, unknown
To Christian climes, demands her for his own.
The pile now rears aloft its awful head,
Where late the bride her gay procession led:
Still ring the notes of merriment: the strain
Of mirth still sweeps along the crowded plain.
Why rush the thousands? Why this grand display
Of pomp and pride? A widow burns to-day!
Must the same mirth, the same bright hues appear
To grace the bridal, and to deck the bier?
Is there no sorrow in the hurrying throng?
Will the wild herd still pour the maddening song?
No breast to sympathize, no tear to fall,
No trembling hand to elevate the pall?
It is some jubilee;—it cannot be,
That death is hail'd with such a savage glee.
Another bridal! see the gathering fire;
The altar stands upon that burning pyre!
There, in still death, the bridegroom waits his spouse:
To bind their union, and renew her vows,
Calmly she stands, and gazes o'er the scene,
Unnerved by thoughts of what she might have been.

How changed that day, on which, almost from birth,
Arose the star of all her hopes on earth!
For, pledged in childhood, all her charms had grown
(So fondly thought she) for that day alone;
To bless his sight, whose name was wont to share
In every wish and every childish prayer,
Since first she lisp'd the mighty Bramah's name!
Yet now unawed she views the spreading flame;
With false devotion gazes on the pile,
And moves to die—with a contented smile;
Waves a farewell; and, stedfast to the last,
Scorns on this world one lingering look to cast.

Yes! she rejects this world without one thought
Of all the bliss but yesterday had brought;
Sees unconcern'd an aged father stand,
And scarcely owns the pressure of his hand;
Hears a loved brother urge her on to die
With cold indifference: not a rebel sigh
Bursts to declare that yet one pulse remains,
Against her will to throb at human pains.
Beyond this transient earth her heart is set;
She dreams that happiness may meet her yet;
Thinks, like a phœnix, 'tis her fate to rise
Pure from her ashes, to adorn the skies;
And bear (for all her torments seek but this)
Her husband with her to divide her bliss.
For this she suffers, and for this she dies;
Disowns, for this, all nature's dearest ties.

O noble spirit! In a Christian's cause,
A martyr's crown, and a whole world's applause,
To buoy the hopes, and mitigate the pain,
Have oft display'd their tempting lures in vain:
Heroes have shrunk before the torture's wheel,
And ev'n in martyrdom have stoop'd to feel.
Yet here, each day, in agonizing fires,
For sinful man some gentle dame expires,
Gentle and pure, with every tender fear
A woman knows, yet all forgotten here.
A cheerful victim, lo, she mounts the pile,
While the flame quickens in the fragrant oil:
The thickening smoke now circles o'er her head;
Her husband's bosom forms an easy bed.
Here she reclines, nor seeks a safer rest;
No couch so sweet as his unconscious breast.
While the fire wreathes around each quiv'ring limb,
She feels it not, she slumbers upon him;—
A fleeting rest: with him she wakes, to reach
Eternal joy, for thus the Vedahs teach.
Too fatal error! Oh! that such a mind
To truth divine should still continue blind!
She will not doubt: devoted to her creed,
She claims the glory, and demands the meed;
Courts the proud triumph of a Hindoo bride,
Betrothed in life, in death to be allied.

About two o'clock in the afternoon I passed the

fort of Buxar, which looks very prettily from the river, which is here of a good breadth. Several European bungalows rise from the banks, and give a lively and English appearance to the scene. This is one of the stations of the Company's stud, and their stables are on both sides of the river: the high road from Calcutta to Benares passes through this station, and by a ferry crosses to the opposite side. The shores present therefore an animated picture: groups, collected on each side, awaiting the passage-boats, and the crowded and various travellers in them, afford plenty of amusement; to which the little uproar that generally ensues upon gathering the fare adds considerably.

It is difficult to conceive a more bustling affair than the passage of the Ganges by a large body, composed, as it ever must be, of such different materials. In October, 1826, I crossed over it at this place, when marching with my regiment from Dinapore to Meerut. We arrived at the point of embarkation about sun-rise, and found a great number of boats awaiting us. They were of all sizes and of several shapes. Some had decks to

them of bamboo rafters, with earth laid over them; others had choppers, or roofs; and many were without decks of any description. Into these latter the soldiers were crowded, while the others were filled by horses, ponies, carriages, gigs, tents, camels, bullocks, palanquins, hackeries, drivers, and servants of all denominations, with every species of trunk and package that can be imagined.

The tumult in getting the fleet afloat was tremendous: many horses refused to enter the boats; and bullocks, frightened at the noise, threw off their loads, and scampered along the banks, their owners running and screaming after them with all their might:—the camels groaning in the painful manner they always do when any thing uncommon in their course occurs—the stubborn elephants declining to go into the water—their mahouts abusing them, and digging their iron instruments into their heads—the quarrelling of the boatmen—the screaming of the servants to protect their masters' property—formed but a slight catalogue of the confusion that prevailed on commencing our passage across the river. The

pencil of the caricaturist would have been incessantly employed in catching the absurdities of the scene. "The march to Finchley," (although I hope, as far as the Europeans were concerned, we were military enough,) did not present half of the ludicrous scenes that our ferry did.

The common way of embarking obstinate horses was very amusing. The saees sat in the boat, and pulled with all his strength at the halter: the unwilling animal naturally backed, and a second groom clasped the first about the waist to prevent his being pulled over; and, according to the power required, other men clapped themselves on. Two stood behind the poor horse, holding a long pole at his hams, to prevent his retreating too far; and frequently co-operated with the pulling party in front, by pushing in concert. Thus goaded, the animal was soon driven to make a leap into the boat. The moment this was done, the horses already in possession began to kick at the new arrival: the frightened grooms let go; then commenced a general fight: the men rushed out, and left the field to the chargers, some of which jumped into the water, and, swimming ashore, galloped off

with half the camp-followers shouting at their heels. The scene of the passage, when all the boats were fairly afloat, was extremely beautiful: there were, at least, a hundred, if not more, crossing in two or three divisions; and, as the river was broad, and the stream very irregular in its course, they appeared to be rowing in several opposite directions. Now that the shouting of the people was at an end, we had the songs of the rowers, and the sounds of our own bugles; and very seldom, I fancy, does the Ganges present so animated and entertaining a spectacle. It took nearly the whole day to effect the passage of "the general camp, pioneers and all."

At night-fall this day we arrived at the mouth of the Soane, and stopped at the ghaut near to the point of that river's junction with the Ganges. I think some antiquarians have been inclined to believe that this meeting took place at one period lower down, close to Patna; which town has, among others, been selected for the honour of representing the ancient Palibothra, founded upon the probability I have mentioned, that the Soane and the Ganges once united in that neighbourhood.

This river is tolerably broad, and of a more blueish tint than the one into which it flows.

The Ganges now grows wider every day, as we proceed, and the stream has become more rapid. Before noon, we were anchored at the ghaut of Dinapore, where there was the usual crowd and bustle. The cantonments are very good; they form two quadrangles. The west side of the larger one contains the barracks of the British regiment, a long line of buildings tolerably cool and comfortable; the others are the houses of the officers. Those at the northern extremity have gardens to them, but the rest are generally close and confined. All around is very flat; and the area which the station occupies stands but a few feet above the river, which, during the rainy season, is a perfect sea; so broad, that the opposite shore appears but a faint line on the horizon.

I think the Ganges is seen in its greatest glory here. The white peaks of the mountains of Nepaul, which are directly eastward of this spot, are frequently very plainly seen during the hottest weather. We have the advantage, therefore, of

a refreshing prospect in the most trying portion of the year:—but

> "Who can hold a fire in his hand
> By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?"

The hardest life that any person can lead is a life of idleness. There is so much difficulty in overcoming this hardship in such a cantonment as Dinapore, during the summer months, that it is not surprising many fall victims to it. Having nothing to do, has always been a reproach against officers of the army in quarters: and it is most deplorably true in this place. At the season of the year I allude to the troops are never employed, and the men are forbidden to be out of their barracks between the hours of seven in the morning and five in the afternoon; the officers, therefore, have nothing to engage their attention, beyond what an hour or two will be ample for, during each day. From sun-rise to sun-set what a weary time many have to toil through; and, when the close of the day enables them to turn out, how little is there to relieve the dulness of their situations!

The country round is flat, sandy, and uninteresting; the society very small; and the extent of the evening exercise is, perhaps, a ride or drive round and round the quadrangles I have mentioned; the view being bounded by the low white-washed buildings on each side. The civil station at Bankipore, nearly nine miles off, is too far to take all the advantage of, that its agreeable residents and pretty situation invite them to: they are of necessity confined very much to the squirrel-like revolutions of their own cage, which, I think, few would pass a year in without sighing for liberty.

When I was last in Dinapore, there was no church, and the service was performed in a room fitted up for the purpose: one has now been commenced, however, and is already some feet above the ground. It will add much to the beauty as well as benefit of the station. It is a singular thing, that the last buildings thought of in the military posts of the British, as well as in the civil stations, are the churches; yet no part of the world requires good places of worship more than this. Many persons, I am con-

vinced, are deterred from frequenting public service from the impossibility of bearing the heat of the rooms they would be obliged to sit in, from their general unfitness, and the restlessness and close contact of all classes that attend.

About eight miles from this, on the road to Benares, is a very pretty mosque standing above a tank, at a place called Moneea. It is going fast to destruction; but it has some of the prettiest carving about it that I have seen in India; plantain-leaves, and flowers, cut in stone most admirably. Several buildings surround the water, and the mosque is well sheltered by trees. It is, indeed, the most quiet and romantic spot I have ever been in.

I did not remain very long at Dinapore; but, standing again to sea, (for although at this season the river is not more than two-thirds of its greatest breadth, it deserves that name,) I soon reached Patna. It was not prudent to approach it closely, from the difficulty of quitting it again, without being lodged on some of its sandbanks; and I found a great number of boats moored to a

dry ridge abreast of the town, to which I caused my bark to be fastened also. I was in hopes, being some little distance from the bazaars, that I might have kept my people all together, and been able to quit it again during the night. I soon discovered, however, that the manjee, and most of his crew, were natives of Patna; and they came to me with their hands clasped, and fawning, as if some terrible calamity had happened to them, to ask leave to visit their friends. They promised faithfully, if I granted it, to return before it was dark. It was impossible to deny what so many whimsical contortions were used to obtain: the smiles, grimaces, and twistings of native petitioners are very singular, and prove how much they have always been taught to consider themselves slaves.

I suspected I was to be deceived, however; and hour after hour passed away without the return of my boatmen. My servants had gone, one after the other, in pursuit of them; and I was left half the night in solitary possession of my boat. I should have been glad to have gone too, but was literally obliged to be my own sentinel,

and could not abandon my post. I had several convivial parties in my neighbourhood; the tom-tom, and the screaming of the singers, made the Ganges echo. A party seemed to be giving a feast to some of the same caste, and positively all ceremony was banished from the board. The dinner was over, and the evening's entertainment consisted of the most awful drumming and singing I ever heard. I found myself, although an unbidden, a much-honored guest; for their exertions were redoubled on perceiving my vicinity. It was a happy meeting, and cost but very little to the donor—a rupee or two: there seemed to be no inclination to intoxicating liquors, or herbs; and, with the exception of the concert, they were extremely orderly.

There is no light or liveliness in a native city at night. Large as Patna is, there is scarcely a lamp to be seen, or a sound to be heard, but what proceeds from the immediate banks of the river, and the lungs of my own neighbours. The houses all face inwards; and the people prefer sitting in clusters, gossiping, in the front of their shops, to enjoying the purer air of the

river. It very seldom happens that a native has the lounging part of his house towards the water; and, provided it be near enough to visit occasionally, it is all he appears to care about.

At daylight, my crew had not returned, and I felt some apprehension of being deserted. At length, about seven, a long and trembling train appeared. I thought it necessary to call to them, with some degree of anger; but could not continue it long, for the still more ludicrous grimaces that were made to propitiate me. The manjee stood at some distance, and writhed about in the most absurd style; while, to heighten the picture, three or four women, the wives of some of the party, with their children in their hands, joined him in a more subdued manner. He, who was the principal flugelman of the crew, pointed first to himself, next to his family, and then towards me, as if dedicating them all to my service; when, clasping his hands, he seemed to say, "I now leave our fate with you."

I thought it proper to scold; but every fresh

word of anger only seemed to renew the gestures: I simply ordered them, therefore, to get into the boat, and make all haste for departure: this called forth fresh action on all sides. 'There is something, surely,' I thought, 'in all this, more than their sorrow for what is past!' and I sent for my sirdar to gather it from them. They said, as they were not likely to return for some time from Calcutta, they hoped I would give them a certain sum of their wages in advance, to leave with their families. While he was interpreting this to me, the anxious looks of the boatmen and their wives were too much to resist. If, while I listened, my eye fell upon them, their eccentric appeal recommenced. When I consented to their request, they were perfectly delighted: it did not seem however, to create great harmony among themselves; for a furious argument began upon the mode of division, which I put a stop to by sending them into the boat. The women were not satisfied with what they had received, and the crew seemed averse to part with more. As they were pushing off, one of the women 'kilted' her clothes 'abune her knee,' and, marching into

the water, insisted upon one more rupee; and, after a long and stormy harangue, she succeeded in gaining her point. They then all collected on the shore, and stood gazing at us till we were out of sight. They seemed very poor and ragged, or they had not been able to do honour to the occasion by coming in their best attire.

I know not whether, at such a parting, the manly cheek of a British seaman would have been bathed by a tear; but the crew of my adventurous bark bore the calamity with much greater philosophy, albeit to them it is a long, and not unfrequently a perilous voyage. The man who gave up the additional rupee to the winning tongue of his wife, seemed to feel the matter the most, perhaps from a consciousness of the ill grace with which he had yielded it; for, generally, they are very ready to give all they have to their families.

The pay the boatmen receive is not much; but it is necessary, on hiring a boat, to stipulate that the greater portion should be paid on the conclusion of the voyage; otherwise, you might be left in a helpless plight from the desertion of your

crew. I have heard many people complain of having found themselves in this dilemma, and I can conceive none more disagreeable. There are not many situations on the banks of the Ganges where one would like to be delayed for more than a day; and, when a boat is abandoned in this manner at any great distance from a town, it will take some time to gather together a sufficient number of dandees to get it off again.

The river has now become a complete thoroughfare; and scarcely a moment passes that we do not pass vessels of every description. The water is deep enough to admit pinnaces; and "they drag their slow length along" without much difficulty. They generally have eighteen or twenty men to tow them, who seem to be much strained (as they creep along the bank) by the effort. One long line is attached to the mast, to which each dandee fastens a piece of bamboo by a short string, at intervals of five or six feet apart, and resting it on his shoulder, pulls with all his strength. If a breeze spring up, and render it unnecessary to tow, they immediately cast off their lines, and, jumping into the water, like

otters, swim on board their vessel. At times, fifty or even a hundred boats may be seen, following each other in a string up the stream; while their numerous dandees are filing along the bank: ten miles a day, however, (the rate at which they usually go) is weary travelling.

In the afternoon, we reached Monghir. On the ghaut of this place there is generally a considerable degree of bustle, from the number of beggars, travellers, bird-fanciers, barbers, and blacksmiths, that assail you with their several commodities and importunities. The town is famous for its manufacture of guns and pistols, and every sort of smith's work; and it is hard to pass an hour near it without being talked into the purchase of some of them. The guns are extremely cheap, but I cannot say much for their utility. Out of six that I once saw tried, four burst. They may do very well to frighten the thieves with; but I would rather be shot at by one, than shoot with it. The small tools of iron and steel, which they present to you, although neat enough to the eye, are very little better in reality. They are the most persevering dealers under the

sun, and seem disposed to accommodate their prices to the most zealous chapman. Some men brought monkeys down to the ghaut for sale, and several had cages of wire, with birds ready to put into them, if we were inclined for the purchase.

Not very far from the ghaut is the gate of the fort, within which are most of the bungalows of Europeans, and through which you must pass to the native town, a remarkably good one. Besides the quantity of hardware made and sold by the natives, there are 'Europe shops,' containing many good and necessary articles, and kept by native merchants. The principal street is so much broader than usual, that you might fancy yourself in a country town in England, were it not for the dust, the flies, and the people. In a street parallel with the chief one, a market is being held, at which as much higgling seems to be going on, as ever was displayed in our own country, but in a louder tone. Among the native women are mixed a great number of half-castes, and European men, their husbands. I fancy these are generally old soldiers, who, permitted to

receive their pensions in this station, have contracted marriages with these women, who are, I think, very pretty: there is great mildness of expression, and modesty of demeanor, about them. They may be said to possess the features of the natives, with the open expression of their white fathers; retaining thus the best part of both, but sadly neutralized by the complexion, which is even worse than the deeper hue of their mothers.

The chief commodities for sale, besides meal, were sweetmeats and fruit, with great store of the coloured armlets worn by the women. I did not think matters appeared very brisk, from my hasty walk through the town. I passed the night at the ghaut of Monghir, and until nearly dark was plagued by the importunities of the blacksmiths and the beggars, who were in great numbers. There are no more wretched objects than these latter, who collect on the banks of the Ganges to gather alms from the travellers: they are sometimes seen in the neighbourhood of a ferry, in crowds of thirty or forty, men, women, and children, naked and miserable; and while your boat

is drifting slowly down, or being dragged up the stream, they follow it with their whining lamentations along the bank. They seem generally to choose spots where there is likely to be some impediment offered to your course, as their fraternity in England select the foot of a hill, for the purpose of continuing longer with you. The men are often mutilated in a disagreeable manner from accident or disease: sometimes they are without toes, and have their hands cut off. The women are more healthy in appearance, and are remarkably well made: a tattered cloth about their loins to serve for a petticoat, is all they wear: their long limbs carry them nimbly and unfettered after you, for a few pice or a little food, which last they are certain to obtain; and if they take up their ground in a judicious position, their lives are very far from lives of want. A flimsy shed, or tent of mats, is sufficient to protect them from the weather; and with towns they have as little commerce, as the trampers through the woody parts of our own country, to whom they bear as strong an affinity in their habits of begging and living, as the gipsies of this and the rest of the world do to

each other. They have always a number of naked children to join in their cries; for, like the trampers, to whom I have compared them, they take good care to increase and multiply to the utmost. When the boatmen or servants are at their meals, they stand at a little distance, soliciting a portion, which is generally collected from each, and placed apart for them to remove without polluting the donors by a close contact. The Hindoos are very charitable, and it seldom happens that the poor go hungry away from them.

CHAPTER IX.

Village of Colgong—Comfortless habitations—Mussulman tomb—Story of a tiger—Rajmahâl—Ruined palace—Tomb of Mr. Cleveland—The Rajmahâl hills—Entrance into the Bhagirutty—Sacred branch of the Ganges—Hindoo toilette—Customs of the Hindoos—Villages of Bengal—Scriptural illustrations—Tamarind trees—Bats—White ants—Singular vow—Insects, vermin, &c.—Architecture in the East—Bazaar at Burhampore—Invalid soldiers—Return to Calcutta—Attachment of native servants—Proof of sincerity.

At daylight we left Monghir, and soon entered an ocean; so wide is the river even at this season of the year. It was necessary to keep in the middle of the stream, and I saw but little of the banks. There is nothing of great interest, except the station of Boglipoor, which, as it stands very low, we could not see, and the hot spring of Seetacoon, between it and Monghir, until within

sight of the Rajmahâl hills, when the whole face of the country is changed. Independently of the beauty of the scenery at this point, it is evident that we are entering a more southern climate: the trees, &c. of the tropics increase in number, and the people are already blacker and more effeminate in their appearance. The change to the province of Bengal, after a long residence in the upper part of India, is very striking.

I came-to, for a short time, at the village of Colgong, which is beautifully situated on a point of land forming the boundary of a deep bay made between it and Pattergotta by the river. The sides of the bay are thickly wooded, and a very dark forest bounds it; while the hills of Rajmahâl rise prettily above. Nearly opposite Colgong, is a cluster of high rocks ascending in the centre of the stream, with trees growing among them: it is a fine object; and nothing can be more picturesque than the oddly-shaped boats, with their ragged sails, issuing from the shadowy pass it seems to be the gate of. The high road from Calcutta lies through this village; and, not very far above it, stands a rest-house or bungalow imme-

diately over the river, and in the midst of a tope of trees: it has a verandah round it, from which there is a lovely prospect.

There is no part of the Ganges where the lovers of the picturesque could better place a house; but it is seldom destined to be occupied, but by people in a very great hurry to get away from it. These houses are very numerous on the road as far as Benares, and are amply provided with rooms, but totally destitute of every thing that can make them habitable. An old woman presides over them, and very prudently keeps her guard without the walls; for more tumble-down edifices never were erected. In a stormy night, all the adventures of an old romance may be realised by even a moderately imaginative traveller: creaking of boards, banging of doors, the whistling of the wind, the flitting of bats, and other proper accompaniments to the freaks of a ghost, with the additional one of the screaming jackals,—are enough to give the air of a haunted castle to any of these rude habitations. A worse intruder than even a ghost may occasionally summon you to rise; for both a tiger and a snake have been known to

carry their researches to the very centre of these buildings.

It was only for the morning mess of meal and water that I stopped at Colgong; but I was not displeased to pass a much longer time at it than necessary for that purpose, to enjoy the beauties of the scene. Unfortunately, I may say here, the stream carries my little vessel so quickly down, I am no sooner within sight of a beauty but it is gone; and the fuss and confusion to get the boat to shore and off again, render it impossible to approach it nearer than the point from which I first discern it.

I passed the pretty village of Sicly Gully without being able to stop to pay a visit to the Mussulman tomb on the summit of a rocky hill behind it, and which is well worth seeing. I climbed up to it on my way up the river in the month of April, when the face of the country was neither so lively nor so rich, and should have been glad to have seen it at a more gay season. The jungle is thick about it; and on that occasion I met some of our party running down the hill, at a great rate, as I was going up it, who declared that they had been interrupted in their examination of it by a

tiger, who seemed to be familiar enough with the spot. Whether their fears magnified a jackall into one or not, I do not know; but when, after a little deliberation upon the prudence of continuing my ascent, I reached the height, he was gone. It is singular enough, that the same story is believed here regarding a periodical visit to this tomb from a tiger, as one or two that I have already noticed in similar places. Thursday, the day at Bowanee Mut, is also the day here; so these animals are governed by an understanding, that they can never have received credit for, even from the showman of a menagerie, who is seldom guilty of suppressing any of the marvellous deeds of his *protégés*. I am very much inclined to think, however, that no tiger made its appearance at Sicly Gully on the day I allude to, although there is no doubt that they infest the neighbourhood. One saw his eyes glare, another plainly saw his tail above the grass, while a third heard him roar. This evidence was certainly sufficient to have established a very formidable animal; but, as the party could not agree upon the roaring, the least difficult part to be deceived in, I felt myself bound to dismiss the case, and I reached my boat

again in safety. I conceive, therefore, I was not far wrong.

Pattergotta, between Colgong and Sicly Gully, is a very pretty and interesting spot. Here, as I have said, the river winds deeply into the shore, making this place and Colgong mark the mouth of the bay; while the rocks in the bed of the stream rise like a miniature Ailsa Craig near the entrance to a very 'wee' Loch Ryan. On that part of the rock that juts from the shore into the river are carved many figures of Hindoo gods and their attributes; and as we sailed near to it, I observed a faquir sitting among them, apparently in contemplation of matters above this world; for he fixed his eyes upon the sun, and seemed to heed little some passing observations that we made to him.

A short time before dusk we reached Rajmahâl, and anchored close beneath the walls of its ruined palace: it must have been very extensive, and its appearance from the river very grand, and in a noble situation for a royal residence. The foundation, on which its outer wall rests, is all of rock; a great rarity indeed throughout India. All the way from Chunar to this spot, and from hence to

Calcutta, there are no rocks to be found but those that are between Colgong and Rajmahâl. The Sultan Sujah, who built this palace, was brother to Aurengzebe, and it was erected, I think, in 1630; an ancient building in this country certainly: when it was abandoned, I do not remember. There is now but one apartment in a perfect state, and that is a most beautiful one, with two smaller ones leading from it: they open over the river, and command a magnificent view.

Night closed in without my noticing it, before I had explored the ruined halls and desolate quadrangles; and I might have been lost in the labyrinth of little apartments and broken terraces, if I had not called lustily for a light from my boat, which was moored close below them. Marble seemed to have been lavished in great profusion upon all the chambers: where the roof had disappeared, and exposed the courts to the air, it was a complete wilderness; and as the rooms would afford admirable shelter to robbers, so might the courts to tigers and snakes.

My boatmen scrambled up different parts of the wall, and ran in numbers through the place, shouting and laughing; while I followed, with most un-

romantic caution, attended by my old lamp-bearer, whose frequent stumbles threatened to plunge me into darkness, and leave me to seek adventure without an esquire. The crew, however, soon joined in my train; and seemed so pleased with the echo they had created, that we left the Sultan Sujah's palace with 'loud whoop and holloa,' for they continued it till the last.

It is near this place that the tomb erected to the memory of Mr. Cleveland (which has been so often noticed) stands; and I think this memorial of a useful man generally excites more interest than the vestiges of splendour in its neighbourhood. It would be fortunate, were it oftener so. I should have been glad to have found the means of visiting the highlanders of these hills, and compared them with my friends of the Himalaya; and I look forward, at some future period, should I ever revisit these scenes, to gratify this desire: but it is not easy in a country of such extent, where only a few months in the year can be safely used for travelling, to say, 'I will go here, or go there;' and where there is so much to remind us of 'the vanity of human wishes,'

my forming such a desire is tolerably presumptuous.

The Rajmahâl hills are mere hillocks, compared even with the first range of the Himalaya: indeed, they do not appear above half the height of the mountains at the mouth of the Clyde: but from the rarity of such sights here, we are disposed to view them with more respect. My servants (who, now that they draw so much further from the field of their great exploits, consider more highly of the feat) cannot disguise their contempt of the little mountains of Rajmahâl, to which they once looked, I have no doubt, with great veneration.

It seemed to give delight to all the people in my boat that we had at last entered Bengal. My sirdar was of Calcutta, and he felt such pleasure in living again within sound of his mother-tongue, that he lost his usual taciturnity for a time, which is very great, and shouted out in Bengalee to every traveller he saw upon the banks; and laughed and nodded when he heard the reply. He seemed to have some well-known jokes to pass, for they were received as understood things,

and elicited, I suppose, a humorous retort; for the answer was hailed with applause very frequently. I could not, however, share in the amusement, and I hope I lost nothing by my ignorance.

We had some difficulty in passing safely into the Bhagirutty, from the shallowness of the water among the low islands at its entrance. There was a strong breeze against us, and it required all the persuasion that I was master of to induce the manjee to struggle with it. I was alarmed at the prospect of spending twenty-four hours at a marshy island, which he would have been too glad to have done. After we had quitted the prospect of the Rajmahâl hills, there was nothing in the least degree inviting on the shores of the Ganges: high reeds upon a sandy soil, with banks so much above the water, that the roof of my boat was frequently lower than them, alone met the eye.

My manjee and crew were disposed to make a jubilee of our entrance upon the Bhagirutty, which is the most important branch of the Ganges, although it loses its name for the more holy one,

by which the river within the mountains is also called. Here the Delta of the Ganges commences the eastern or main stream, which we have just left, running on past Dacca, till it joins the Megna. From Allahabad to this spot it is about six hundred miles; and even now, when the water is at its least depth, I have every day, in my descent from that city, met with so many vessels, that I have been constantly in a crowd, some of them tiny frigates in full sail, floating as safely as if they had been in the midst of the sea.

I had no reason to refuse the petition of my crew; and I made them a present, to do honour to the occasion of their quitting the great branch for the most sacred one. They strung a garland of flowers on the prow of the boat, and sprinkled it with water from the venerated stream; and thus decorated, we floated merrily down. The head of the boat was cut to resemble an alligator; and a large eye was painted on each side. The vessels are generally carved in imitation of fish, and are seldom without their eyes; they have this custom in common with some parts of the Mediterranean; and, indeed, a speronaro is very

little different in appearance from a large panchwa, nor are its sailors much more courageous than the dandees, as I can testify from experience, having been once driven into the island of Stromboli in a slight gale of wind, from which we could not induce our crew to put off for four days, although there was very little sea, and nothing more than a good breeze remained.

The banks are much prettier, and more thickly interspersed with villages than those on each side of the main stream; and there is a greater concourse of people towards the river, particularly of women, who are very active in carrying water. Both sexes wear finer and whiter clothes, and remain a longer time at their toilette after bathing. The men do not cut their hair, but allow it to grow long behind, as the women do, and are obliged to wait till it becomes dry enough to turn up: besides, they have to paint themselves in all manner of ways, and of all shades, before their daily dressing can be deemed complete. It is a ludicrous sight, to see a string of fellows squatting upon the shore with a small glass in their hands, 'picking' out their figures with yellow, white, or

red, as the case may be, or their castes may require. It is not the custom for the women to do this, although it is difficult to obtain a glimpse of their countenances to judge from; a red line, between the division of their hair in front, being the only mark I have observed, which is used to denote marriage.

My sirdar could not resist the opportunity of being marked; and, having gone early in the day to bathe, when a little below Jungypoor, which we passed this morning, he returned to me such a figure, that I had some difficulty in recognising him. He had several streaks of yellow on his forehead, in the centre of which was a white circle, a line of yellow on his nose, round his ears, and on his cheeks, with three of the same colour, I think, on the tips of his shoulders, and his chest. I do not remember seeing him similarly distinguished in the upper provinces, although in all respects a very rigid Hindoo. The natives of Orissa and Bengal, who are the most scrupulous in their own provinces, are prone enough to pass slightly over many necessary rites when away from home: they resemble strongly,

in this, most of their Christian brethren, who are always very glad to avail themselves of the license of the proverb, 'When in Rome, do as they do in Rome!'

The first place of any size in the Bhagirutty is Jungypoor, which is a large and bustling town. The river was full of vessels of all descriptions, and a custom-house boat pushed off immediately on our appearing, to board us. The peon had a book, which he presented to me to write my name in, and which exhibited a long catalogue of travelling *Sahib Logue*. The villages are very picturesquely situated among palm-trees and mangoes. The houses are thatched or roofed with mats; and pumpkins creep about them, and enliven their appearance with the yellow blossom or the ripening fruit; while a little cluster of plantain-trees, with their graceful leaves, stands near every cottage.

Nothing can exceed the cleanliness of these houses. There is generally a verandah in front, the floor of which is of earth, plastered with chunam, and quite hard and free from dust. Here the women sit to grind corn, two at one

stone; and I need not observe how interesting such a sight must be. Almost every domestic custom of this country is a Scriptural illustration. I have seldom observed one woman carry more than one pitcher of water from the river: a great portion of the day, therefore, must be passed in the *trajet* backward and forward: neither is the practice itself so common on the shores of the Ganges, as on those of the Nile; and there they have a much greater distance to come, their villages being situated on the skirt of the cultivated land. I have counted five pitchers of a good size at one time, upon the person of an Egyptian female; one on the head—one on the left shoulder, held on by the left hand—the third in a sling at the back, which is kept on by a band passing over her forehead—the fourth on the right shoulder, and the fifth in the hand; and, thus loaded, the pitchers are brought many times to the stream without being broken.

I think, although the banks of the Nile are much richer, I should give the preference to the scenery of the Ganges within the province of Bengal. To those who love to lead a simple life,

I would recommend a cottage beneath the broad leaves of the plantain, or in the neighbourhood of a copse of bamboo, on the banks of the Bhagirutty. I should be very much inclined to exclaim, in the words of the song,—

> If there 's peace to be found in this world,
> A heart that is humble may look for it here;

for, of all quiet situations on earth, these are the quietest.

We anchored on the left bank of the river at sun-set, about midway between Jungypoor and Moorshedabad. Some large tamarind trees grew near the river; while a grove of the areca palms stretched, like a forest of high masts, beyond it. In the branches of the tamarinds were crowds of large bats, hanging in clusters by their feet, and so tenacious of their hold, that all the noise and beating of the tree we made did not induce them to relinquish it: I believe they are the vampire bat, and are quite harmless. They have a most singular appearance when hanging in the way I have described: as the night sets in, when they drop from their perch, and flit about, they seem formidable

enough, although at first they start with considerable awkwardness. Buffon, I remember, thinks it likely that these creatures furnished the notion of the harpies to the ancients. They are certainly as disagreeable as those animals could have been; and I should be loth, indeed, to see them assail my table. I believe, however, they confine themselves entirely to vegetable food, and make sad havock in a fruit-tree.

Among other destructive creatures on the banks of the river, are innumerable white ants. Their nests are the most extraordinary erections, when considered as the work of such little insects: but, what cannot a multiplication of power perform? They are often four feet high, full of peaks, and perforated with countless chambers: it would take a strong arm, with a pick-axe, some time to demolish one. Beneath the shadow of a tree near me there is a very large one, in which the work seems to be still going forward: as they carry on their operations, however, under a covert way, you cannot watch them as they creep in and out. I am reminded by it of the situation of a poor Yogee in a Sanscrit play, translated by Sir William Jones,

Sacontala, or the Fatal Ring.' He had sworn to stand all his life under the branches of the tree, and kept his resolution so religiously, that he moved not even when the white ants commenced building at his feet: their structure rose higher and higher every day; until, at length, the virtue of the poor ascetic became a dire necessity. He was enclosed in the building; and, to the last moment of his life, "the ants they crept in, and the ants they crept out," and his voluntary suffering must have been as severe as his heart could have wished.

These ants are not so often seen in houses in this part of India, as I have noticed elsewhere. In the interior of Ceylon they swarm to such a degree, that they have been known to bring the roof of a house down; and the floors teem so with them, that if you leave any thing (a pair of shoes, for instance,) upon them, they will destroy it in no time. The ground in the neighbourhood of Candy is so covered with their nests, that you might fancy the city surrounded with the *tumuli* of former days. Indeed, that town is so infested with insects and vermin of all descriptions,

that it is appalling to think of them. During a shower of rain, I have seen scorpions rush out of their hiding-places by threes and fours at a time, and crawl about the floor of my rooms; lizards creeping at all times on the walls; tremendous spiders weaving away in the corners; white ants sapping the floors, or eating into the roof; leeches stealing under the legs of my trowsers, or up the sleeves of my coat; while the rat or snake amuses itself with hunting its prey, "up stairs, down stairs, and in my lady's chamber," till driven to take refuge in the very bed itself.

These things, however, are more formidable in description than (strange to say!) they become in reality; for habit so soon reconciles you to them, that you look with perfect indifference at all the mighty host. The snakes, that travel about the house, are of a very harmless nature, and do a great deal of good in clearing it of the more troublesome inmates, the rats, which are beyond all number, and so bold, that it is no easy matter to control their freaks.

January 1.—This is New-Year's day; and I pass it in solitude, although in the midst of a

populous stream, if I may say so. I have passed the city of Moorshedabad, and am near the cantonment of Burhampore, below the scene of the beautiful festival of the Bherah, which I witnessed some years ago, and have already described. There is some officer engaged, I believe, in erecting a new palace for the Nawaub, which is not yet finished; for the same ill-looking, unroyal building still stands on the banks of the river—a model of bad taste, but, I think, of some originality, which may, haply, be a redeeming point. We have certainly not introduced a very high order of architecture into our possessions in this country; for which, in a great degree, however, the climate must be responsible. I cannot conceive any thing more ugly than a British cantonment at Burhampore, Dinapore, or any of the other 'pores:' and the architects of such extraordinary piles cannot plead the having sacrificed ornament for comfort; for few contrivances could have been devised better calculated for heat, and less adapted for the admission of air, than the quarters of the unfortunate officers who garrison these stations.

There is generally a king's regiment at Burhampore; and it is one of the neatest of the stations in outward appearance, particularly along the bank of the river, above which there is a delightful walk, where the only pure air is to be inhaled. On the inner side, the country is very beautiful and rich in all oriental trees and shrubs: there are some fine rides about it, and the wooded lanes in the neighbourhood of Chumpa Poca, may remind you of similar green retreats in our own country. Here the Resident at the court of Moorshedabad has a magnificent house. A native bazaar extends along the ghaut of Burhampore, and behind it are huts enough to constitute a good-sized village; which, to my mind, with its numerous plantain-trees and creeping pumpkins, is a far prettier object than the flat-roofed white houses of the Europeans, which tower beside them.

The bazaar is unfortunately too attractive, and the boatmen are assembled there in noisy crowds. I am kept awake by the discordant sounds of the tom-tom, and divers stringed instruments, with the furious accompaniment of their voices:—

alas for such melody! The pier is thronged with boats of all descriptions, many of them occupied by invalids going to Calcutta, to embark for England—not before they require it, poor fellows!

Soldiers do not generally wish to return home, after having spent any number of years in India; and, indeed, they are so unfitted for the colder climate, that they would be miserable in the exchange. Those men who are obliged to go from the country, on account of their health, to be discharged, are very much to be pitied. They are just enough spoiled by their residence in the east, to prevent their being able to do any thing for themselves on their return; and lead, I fear, sad lives.

January 3.—Yesterday, at noon, I quitted Burhampore; and went so quickly down the stream, that I had no great cause to complain of its want of variety; for between that place and Hoogly, where the river makes a very pretty bend, all is sufficiently uninteresting. Hoogly is now only distinguished for giving its name to this branch, the most navigable and best-known

one of the Ganges. After quitting it, we seem to enter another world: town after town arises—magnificent houses, villages without end, and ships from all parts of the world. It is difficult to conceive a more agreeable prospect than the sail downwards, with the wind and tide in your favour, as I have had it; passing, in quick succession, Chandernagore, Serampore, Barrackpore, Chinsurah, and village after village, embosomed in fruit-trees, with pagodas, tombs, and ghauts. The contrast between a bustling town and the quiet Bengalee hamlet, is great indeed; and it may be said, in praise of their inhabitants, that they do not seem to be spoiled by their vicinity to comparative riot and dissipation; for they are as simple in their habits, as much devoted to their customs, as in spots most removed from the haunts of foreigners. The system of castes appears to be well calculated to inspire content: their greatest misery, would be a change of manners.

It was past ten at night before we anchored at the ghaut nearest the fort of Calcutta, where I remained until this morning, the 4th. I

have been exactly thirty days travelling from Ghurmoktesir to Fort William—a distance, I think, of twelve hundred miles; and although a month is a long time to pass in a little boat like mine, (that, however, was my own fancy,) I would not forego the pleasure I have received from a sail through so large and interesting a portion of Hindostan, for ten times the inconvenience.

I shall conclude with one circumstance, that, I think, will serve to corroborate what I have elsewhere said, about the attachment of the natives to their masters. Their gratitude, I know, is frequently impeached; and, from what I have observed, unjustly. I meant to have discharged several of the least useful of my servants immediately, and told them that I should do so. They besought me, with one voice, to permit them to remain with me, until my final departure; not, as they said, for the sake of "eating my salt," but for the pleasure of seeing me to the last. I should have considered this a proper eastern compliment, and been disposed to receive it as such, but for the ear-

nestness with which the request was made. Although I did not agree to keep them, their sincerity was proved by their daily visits, until they bestowed their last salaam, on the deck of the boat that carried me to the sand-heads.

THE END.

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